

# THE ECLECTIC.

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## I.

### ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.\*

WE have long purposed to devote a few pages to a paper on Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a woman for whom has been claimed 'the place among women that Shakspeare occupies among men;' but as we have approached the possibility and the subject, it has fallen away from us—we have feared to speak a name we desired to pronounce with more than usual reverence, and we have also feared that the sublime reach of the writer's ordinary expression and conception would find us and our subject remote from many in our audience. We purposed, when we were prepared, to give some careful preliminary thought. Especially we wished to have spoken with more distinctness, because our subject closely touches upon a question which is no nearer solution now than ever, namely, that of the intellectual relation of the sexes. There is a certain order of mind belonging to us, which will never understand this; and there are multitudes who will never condescend to attempt to comprehend the question—'it is foolishness to them;' but the appearance of a woman like Mrs. Browning does something, in a very emphatic way, to settle the question. We must entreat our readers' patience. We think this woman also demands our reverence. Reverence is seldom unbecoming in us, but the worst of talking, such as we indulge in from time to time, about the great dead, is, that it endangers our reverence by too great a familiarity. But what can we reverence—suffering?—if we would speak reverently to Aaron in his bells, about to minister within the veil, or to the minister touching sacred things at the altar; even a bad man has this, that while ministering, he has the power of overawing given to him. Well! may we not reverence suffering then? The very bereaved become venerable while the power of their

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\* *Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Poetical Works.* Fifth edition.  
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bereavement is on them. Shall we not reverence those who are able to climb the highest altar-stairs—who can hold and handle the true sublime? Is not that a great power still given to man, to call down fire from heaven, and not to consume the unbeliever, but to kindle the sacrifice? Elizabeth Barrett Browning had, in a very eminent degree, all these powers; and we feel for her the reverence which we would fain infuse into other hearts. She has suffered something from editors and reviewers, and their race (who that is best and noblest has not?) The race of Gifford or of Zoilus is not extinct: would that it were! But fancy a critic without reverence. Yet such have mostly spoken of Mrs. Browning, and even while they spoke, we have thought we heard the echo of the consecrating words of the very genius of Dulness—‘Here and hereby, I anoint thee and set thee apart to be the chief ass and noodle; an ass thyself, thou shalt also be able to give ears to others.’ Oh! brother critics, we sometimes say, do but let us think, there is somewhere in our midst the chiefest of donkeydom and dulness. It may be we—we know not—but how careful it behoves us to be lest, while pointing the finger of contempt at some venerable form, by that very sign, the genius of dulness should claim us as best-beloved, and nearest to his love and liking. We may presume our friends to be not unacquainted with Luther’s rookery. Just beneath his window, he says, is a small wood, and there the rooks and jackdaws do hold their diet. They are journeying to and fro, and keeping up a clamour without any ceasing, as if they were all drunken—all chattering at once. ‘Their emperor,’ says good Martin, ‘I have not seen, but their nobles are for ever strutting before our eyes—not in very costly garments, but rather simply clad in one colour, all dressed in black; all are grey-eyed, all sing the same song, with some petty differences. There are high and mighty lords among them, but what they resolve I know not. Thus much have I gathered from an interpreter, that they have a mighty expedition and war in hand against wheat and barley, oats, rye, and all manner of corn and grain; and herein will many win knighthood and do great feats of arms. We humbly salute them all, and wish them all spitted on a page-stake together.’ It will not be very unrighteous to give some such characterization as the fitting one to that singular literary rookery, the Diet of Reviewers. We belong to the craft, but it may truly be said, a more horny-eyed race of dotards has seldom been seen. They sought to clamour down Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Elizabeth Browning. Truly, when we think of these things, we perceive that the world has need of *us*! to read to critics lessons in the art of criticism.

But what is poetry? and what is the use of it? May we attempt to tell you a North American tradition, possibly not unknown to our readers? There was a beautiful girl of one of the tribes, who died suddenly and young, on the very day on which she was to have been married to a handsome young Indian warrior. He was brave, but he was not proof against his loss; he flung aside his war-club, and bow and arrows; there was no joy or peace for him, and he sat musing ever by the spot where the women buried her; for these Indians in this have a likeness to us, although we are incomparably their lords; like us, nature teaches them to love. He had heard the old people speak of a path which led to the land of souls, for even the Indians have in their thoughts, and hopes, and songs, a land of souls; and he determined to try to find the path and to follow it; he made preparations for the journey. He knew not which way he must go, but tradition said he must go south. For a long time, as he prosecuted the pathway, he saw in the face of the country no change; the forests, the hills, the valleys, and the streams, wore the same appearance as round his native forests, and the early home of his lost and buried love. As he passed along, there was snow on the ground, and he saw it piled on the thick trees and bushes. But at length the snow began to diminish, and finally it disappeared, and the forests became more cheerful; the air became mild; the dark clouds of winter rolled away from the sky; he saw new flowers, and heard the songs of birds; and by these signs he knew that he was in the right way, and that he had left behind him the land of snow and ice. At length he came to a path, and to a grove, and to an elevated ridge and chain of hills, and then to a lodge; and at the door stood an old man with white hair, and deep-sunk eyes of startling brilliancy; his shoulders were covered with a robe of skins, and he had a staff in his hand. 'Father,' said the young man, 'have you seen my bride pass this way?' The chief interrupted the young Chippewayan. 'I have expected you,' said he, 'you are welcome; she whom you seek passed this way not many days since. See yonder gulf, and the wide-stretching plain beyond? that is the land of souls. You are upon its borders—this is the gate of entrance. But you cannot take your body with you, leave it here, and your arrows, and your dog, and you will find your body safe when you return. And he did so, and the free traveller bounded forward, as if he had suddenly received the power of wings. But all things as he went retained their colours and their shapes,—woods, leaves, streams, lakes, were only more bright and



comely than those he had left. Creatures sprung by him with freedom and confidence, for no blood was shed there ; and birds of beautiful plumage inhabited the groves, and sported on the waters. But he noticed one thing—the trees and objects did not stop his passage. They were in fact the souls of material trees. He became sensible that he was in the land of shadows. He travelled on long, when he came to the banks of a broad lake, and in the centre a large and beautiful island ; and there he found on the margin a shining white canoe. The old man had told him of this. There were shining paddles. He entered the canoe, and took the paddles in his hands, and to his joy and surprise he beheld the object of his search by his side in a white canoe, the very counterpart of his. They pushed out from shore, and began to cross the lake, and to make for the island, but they were in fear, for the waves rose, and through the clear waters they could see heaps of beings who had perished before, and whose bones lay strewed at the bottom of the lake ; but the master of life had decreed to let them pass, and they passed over the whitened edge of the waves. But they saw many sinking ; old men, were there, and young men, and males, and females of all ranks and ages ; some passed, and some sank ; it was only the children whose canoes seemed to meet no waves, and who never sank. And at last our happy pair leapt out of their canoes upon the happy island. They felt that the air was food ; they felt that it nourished and it strengthened ; there were no tempests ; there was no ice ; there were no winds, and no one suffered hunger, and no one mourned for the dead. The young warrior longed to stay with his bride, but he had to go back for his body. He did not see the master of life ; but he heard his voice whispering on a soft breeze, ‘Oh, thou highly favoured, go back to the land whence you came ; your time has not yet come ; you have not finished the duties for which I made you ; return to your people ; you have visited the land of souls ; therefore you will be a ruler of your people for many days. Go back and take up your body, and then you shall return and rejoin the spirit of your bride, waiting for you here in the house of life. She is accepted ; and she will be always happier here, than when I first called her from the land of snow.’ And the voice ceased, and the young warrior awoke. He was still in the land of snow, but that was true which the master of life told him ; he became a great leader, for he had visited the land of souls.

This beautiful tradition is not only poetry itself, but it is an answer also to the question, What are the uses of *poetry*? Poetry, as we define it, of the highest order, is *a message from*



*the land of souls*; and poetry of the highest order has further this attribute, that *it fits the spirit of the man able to read and to understand, to visit himself the land of souls*. This is, at any rate, assuredly the highest purpose. This was the purpose of Hebrew bards; this was the spirit of Homer and of Ossian; the highest poetry has ever 'shamed the doctrine of the Sadducee, and described a land of souls beyond the sable shore.' There is poetry, indeed, in the witchery of the blue sky, and the green and flower-enamelled world; in rivers that move in majesty; in the solemn brood of pathless and illimitable wilds and woods. Poetry hallows all things, consecrates the mountain chain, and the lowly farm. But far more does poetry deal with men's affections, hopes, enthusiasms; the ever brightening eye of childhood; the calm eye of still and holy age; woman in her weakness of frame, and her glory and patience of soul; men, their strivings, their ambitions, their failings and errors; nations, their pulse, their powers, their dreams of ambition, and their decline. But chiefly all poetry finds its rapture and its rest in its dealings with souls. It enters into them, their ambitions, their fears, their sympathies; describes their daring, their dreams; drops down to their weakness; high over and aloft carols and soars with them, beyond them. More, it interprets them to themselves; shows to them deeps of their own tenderness, intentions in their own suffering, unread, unthought of before; draws up the curtain from before their heaven, and makes earth wonderful by their presence.

'A light that never was on sea or land.'

But still this poetry, it may be said, is very pretty, but what is the use of it after all? Is it not very much like an old lady's china, more remarkable as a curiosity than a necessity? Like chimney-ornaments, or Indian antiquities, rather a matter of trifling than even of taste, and more useful to fill up the corners of an idle life, than to strengthen the activities of a busy one? We have thought the question may be put thus:—Is there any value in the work of ministers; and what is their value? We used to know an amiable friend, who declared his will and wish to have a dozen of the ringleaders, as he called the more eminent of our ministers, shot in the market-place for a public example, and the remainder ordered off and confined to some distant penal and industrial settlement. Amiable and friendly man! Not a bad fellow either in some moods of him. We have lost sight of him now for twenty years. We can see that a man like that would not be likely to relish the works of our authoress. But suppose the race of ministers to be

useful, who then is to be the minister's minister? For man cannot live by bread alone, and of all men the minister. But who then is to be the minister? not our brethren, for they have most likely got no farther than we have, and see no more; they are in the shock of battle as we are. Who then? Why some old middle-age monk in his old black letter cowl, or some still and tranquil heart, shut up to its sick chamber from a life of strife; or some such being as Mrs. Browning, in whom may be united the lofty intuition to the widest possible culture, and the reach of hopes and aspirations most sublime. She is the minister's minister.

Of all the poets to whom poetry has been a terribly beautiful delineation of souls, and of the land of souls, we will not surely say through all ages Mrs. Browning is the highest; but we will say she must rank as high as any. Have we not in reading poets said, That is very beautiful! That is great! That is true! but we have closed the book, and have turned our face to the fire, and mused, and said: 'Ah, but that is not highest, there is more than that!' Why, we say that when we read Shakspeare, How beautiful! how glorious! Ah, vivid scenes! Ah, terrible! Ah, fairy world! but there is more than *that*. And when we read Goethe, how soon we turn from that crystal palace where iron is made to mingle with the glass in its firm transparency; and we say, yes, how beautiful, and how terrible! but there is more than *that*. And when we read Schiller—brave, passionate, free, devoted; after his noble ballads have rung their most sonorous chime, we say, Ah! but there is more than *that*. And of Cowper, we say the same; and of Wordsworth, and of Tennyson. We cannot perhaps always superadd to that we have received, *the* more than that, but the height of the poetry may be measured by the depth of the peace that it bestows, the calm of the satisfaction it gives,—as it leaves the spirit unable to say, 'More than that! more than that!' That shall always be in our estimation the highest which fills up most completely the void vessel of our humanity—our heart. You read Goethe. Is it not eminently unsatisfactory? Have we not exclaimed, 'Oh, God! this won't do; this answers no highest.' And turning to Schiller, have we not felt the satisfaction of accomplished rest? But there come times when Schiller is as far from satisfying as Goethe; the highest in us listens for the highest while we read, and listen in vain. Shall we make our readers understand what we mean, when we say, as comparing Goethe and Schiller together, the latter poet answers most to the desire of the soul? So we would call Elizabeth Browning the Schiller of our higher nature. Oh, had she possessed the

artist faculty so richly possessed by the German! But know that she spoke of far more distant things. She could touch plaintive tones, moving to the every day tears of life. She had a reed, a simple reed, on which she poured forth notes, as we may hear, to charm very human simple hearts. She had flute-like airs, but you know her best by the trumpet. This simple, blithe woman, has, against all the hostility of critics, shattered away the prejudices of thousands who did not hear her gladly, but were compelled to hear—universally now crowned chief woman-poet of any age or time. This homage was wrung for her from even the cold lip of the *Athenæum*, as she descended into her prematurely sculptured tomb—chief poetess of all ages. We may, perhaps, scarcely compete for her admission into that rank of men, where perhaps only should be seen the sacred four,—Homer and Dante, Milton and Shakspeare; and yet, with the exception of Dante, not one had, as she had, entered into the scenery, the mystery, the majesty, the sorrow and glory of the higher life. Could she have learned more? The 'Casa Guidi Windows' is full of a vehement flow of passionate speech, revealing the amazing flood which rushed through her soul; thus the following on—

## PRIESTS.

'Priests, priests!—there's no such name.—God's own, except  
 Ye take most vainly. Through Heaven's lifted gate  
 The priestly ephod in sole glory swept,  
 When Christ ascended, entered in, and sate  
 With victor face sublimely overwept,  
 At Deity's right hand, to mediate,  
 He alone, he for ever. On his breast  
 The Urim and the Thummim, fed with fire  
 From the full Godhead, flicker with the unrest  
 Of human, pitiful heartbeats. Come up higher,  
 All Christians! Levi's tribe is dispossessed!  
 That solitary alb ye shall admire,  
 But not cast lots for. The last chrism, poured right,  
 Was on that Head, and poured for burial  
 And not for domination in men's sight.  
 What are these churches? The old temple wall  
 Doth overlook them juggling with the sleight  
 Of surplice, candlestick, and altar-pall.  
 East church and west church, ay, north church and south,  
 Rome's church and England's,—let them all repent,  
 And make concordats 'twixt their soul and mouth,  
 Succeed St. Paul by working at the tent,  
 Become infallible guides by speaking truth,  
 And excommunicate their own pride that bent  
 And cramped the souls of men.'

The following extract is from her 'Poems before Congress,' from much of which, politically, we cordially dissent:—



## THE REGENERATION OF ITALY.

'Is it true—may it be spoken,—  
 That she who has lain so still  
 With a wound in her breast,  
 And a flower in her hand,  
 And a grave-stone under her head,  
 While every nation at will  
 Beside her has dared to stand  
 And flout her with pity and scorn,  
 Saying, "She is at rest,  
 She is fair, she is dead,  
 And, leaving room in her stead  
 To us who are later born,  
 This is certainly best!"  
 Saying, "Alas, she is fair,  
 Very fair, but dead,  
 And so we have room for the race."  
 —Can it be true, be true,  
 That she lives anew?  
 That she rises up at the shout of her sons,  
 At the trumpet of France,  
 And lives anew?—is it true  
 That she has not moved in trance,  
 As in Forty-eight?  
 When her eyes were troubled with blood  
 Till she knew not friend from foe,  
*Till her hand was caught in a strait  
 Of her cœmement and baffled so  
 For doing the deed she would;  
 And her weak foot stumbled across  
 The grave of a king,*  
 And down she dropt at heavy loss,  
 And we gloomily covered her face and said,  
 "We have dreamed the thing;  
 She is not alive, but dead."

'Ay, it is so, even so.  
 Ay, and it shall be so.  
 Each broken stone that long ago  
 She flung behind her as she went  
 In discouragement and bewilderment  
 Through the cairns of Time, and missed her way  
 Between to-day and yesterday,  
 Up springs a living man.  
*And each man stands with his face in the light  
 Of his own drawn sword,*  
 Ready to do what a hero can.  
 Wall to sap, or river to ford,  
 Cannon to front, or foe to pursue,  
 Still ready to do, and sworn to be true,  
 As a man and a patriot can.  
 Piedmontese, Neapolitan,  
 Lombard, Tuscan, Romagnole,  
 Each man's body having a soul,—

Count how many they stand,  
All of them sons of the land,  
*Every live man there*  
*Allied to a dead man below,*  
And the deadeast with blood to spare  
To quicken a living hand  
In case it should ever be slow.  
Count how many they come  
To the beat of Piedmont's drum,  
With faces keener and grayer  
Than swords of the Austrian slayer,  
All set against the foe.  
"Emperor  
Evermore."

'Out of the dust, where they ground them,  
Out of the holes, where they dogged them,  
Out of the hulks, where they wound them  
In iron, tortured and flogged them;  
Out of the streets, where they chased them,  
Taxed them and then bayoneted them,—  
Out of the homes, where they spied on them,  
(Using their daughters and wives),  
Out of the church, where they fretted them,  
Rotted their souls and debased them,  
Trained them to answer with knives,  
Then cursed them all at their prayers!—  
Out of cold lands, not theirs,  
Where they exiled them, starved them, lied on them;  
Back they come like a wind, in vain  
Cramped up in the hills, that roars its road  
The stronger into the open plain;  
Or like a fire that burns the hotter  
And longer for the crust of cinder,  
Serving better the ends of the potter;  
*Or like a restrained word of God,*  
*Fulfilling itself by what seems to hinder.'*

Could she have given us more had she lived longer—'this Britomart among poets'—this Una among poetesses. As we do not desire especially to refer to her political poetry again, we may say here, that she with her husband—her peer in genius—lived in Florence for the last twelve years, and with wonderful energy threw herself into the Italian cause. We do not admire this order of her poems in an equal degree with those more truly hers; but let these suffice as illustrations of the majestic vehemence to which she could knit her speech.

We suppose life never opened more radiantly than it opened for Elizabeth Barrett. She was born in London—born in opulence—the daughter of a merchant in one of our Dissenting circles; and the first vision we have of her is about the year

1830—a young girl, with a radiant shower of golden curls—her loyal young head filled with all audacious thoughts. Miss Mitford vividly brings her before our eyes as she saw her, and gives us to see her most expressive face, and large tender eyes fringed with dark eye-lashes; her sweet smile, and a look, she says, of such youthfulness, that it was difficult to persuade some friends she was old enough to be introduced into company. Yet this young creature had dared to translate the Prometheus of Æschylus, and to be the authoress of an *Essay on Mind*, in which she deals freely with the names of Gibbon, Berkley, Bolingbroke, Plato, and Bacon. Miss Mitford was far advanced in life, but it seems a pleasant intimacy sprang up between the cheerful old lady and the young girl. One likes to see her at this period of her life, little as we know of her at all—in fact, a bright, glorious girl—with womanhood before her, and the prospect of easy, happy womanhood. It is worth noticing, that as yet her higher feelings and emotions had taken no shape. She had thought, and read, and translated, but her verses, by all account, do not take rank above those of Hayley or Miss Seward. We will conceive her as a buoyant, happy girl. Some will perhaps say, Elizabeth Browning never could have been a happy girl. What! do we not remember how happy we were till—till when? That was not the time when there was a danger of some unhappy question in every book you touched. Men lived much farther from the knowledge of human woes, and the more daring methods in which we now arraign Divine governments; and ordinances were not yet followed by system. Remembering what her life became, one lingers tenderly round the girl's years, soon and suddenly to close before her by a black, impenetrable veil. Those first years were passed alternately in London and near Malvern, among those wild and charming hills on the Herefordshire side. Her father had a country residence there, and thus, with her beloved brother, she followed her early and beloved studies, especially Greek. Her lines to her well-known teacher, Hugh Stewart Boyd, glance back to that time: they have often been quoted. 'The wine of Cyprus,'—but space forbids the quotation here.

The evil days speedily came. Miss Mitford's acquaintance with her began about the year 1835, and it was the year following she broke a blood-vessel on the lungs, which did not heal, yet consumption did not intervene. She was confined for twelve months to her chamber, in her father's house, in Wimpole Street; and there Dr. Chambers, on the approach of winter, ordered her removal to a milder climate. She was removed to Torquay. Her brother, more beloved far beyond what that relationship usually represents, accompanied her, and there at last



happened that calamity which, even far more than personal illness and danger, threw the shadow and gloom over her life.

Miss Mitford says,—

‘Nearly a twelvemonth had passed, and the invalid, still attended by her affectionate companions, had derived much benefit from the mild sea-breezes of Devonshire. One fine summer morning her favourite brother, together with two other fine young men, his friends, embarked on board a small sailing-vessel for a trip of a few hours. Excellent sailors all, and familiar with the coast, they sent back the boatmen, and undertook themselves the management of the little craft. Danger was not dreamt of by any one; after the catastrophe, no one could divine the cause, but in a few minutes after their embarkation, and in sight of their very windows, just as they were crossing the bar, the boat went down, and all who were in her perished. Even the bodies were never found. I was told by a party who were travelling that year in Devonshire and Cornwall, that it was most affecting to see on the corner houses of every village street, on every church-door, and almost on every cliff for miles and miles along the coast, handbills, offering large rewards for linen cast ashore marked with the initials of the beloved dead; for it so chanced that all the three were of the dearest and the best; one, I believe, an only son, the other the son of a widow.

‘This tragedy nearly killed Elizabeth Barrett. She was utterly prostrated by the horror and the grief, and by a natural but a most unjust feeling that she had been in some sort the cause of this great misery. It was not until the following year that she could be removed in an invalid carriage, and by journeys of twenty miles a day, to her afflicted family and her London home. The house that she occupied at Torquay had been chosen as one of the most sheltered in the place. It stood at the bottom of the cliffs almost close to the sea; and she told me herself that during that whole winter the sound of the waves rang in her ears like the moans of one dying. Still she clung to literature and to Greek; in all probability she would have died without that wholesome diversion of her thoughts. Her medical attendant did not always understand this. To prevent the remonstrances of her friendly physician, Dr. Barry, she caused a small edition of Plato to be so bound as to resemble a novel. He did not know, skilful and kind though he were, that to her such books were not an arduous and painful study, but a consolation and a delight.

Returned to London, she began the life which she continued for so many years, confined to one large and commodious but darkened chamber, admitting only her own affectionate family and a few devoted friends (I, myself, have often joyfully travelled five-and-forty miles to see her, and returned the same evening without entering another house); reading almost every book worth reading in every language, and giving herself heart and soul to that poetry of which she seemed born to be the priestess.’

1830—a young girl, with a radiant shower of golden curls—her loyal young head filled with all audacious thoughts. Miss Mitford vividly brings her before our eyes as she saw her, and gives us to see her most expressive face, and large tender eyes fringed with dark eye-lashes; her sweet smile, and a look, she says, of such youthfulness, that it was difficult to persuade some friends she was old enough to be introduced into company. Yet this young creature had dared to translate the *Prometheus* of *Æschylus*, and to be the authoress of an *Essay on Mind*, in which she deals freely with the names of Gibbon, Berkley, Bolingbroke, Plato, and Bacon. Miss Mitford was far advanced in life, but it seems a pleasant intimacy sprang up between the cheerful old lady and the young girl. One likes to see her at this period of her life, little as we know of her at all—in fact, a bright, glorious girl—with womanhood before her, and the prospect of easy, happy womanhood. It is worth noticing, that as yet her higher feelings and emotions had taken no shape. She had thought, and read, and translated, but her verses, by all account, do not take rank above those of Hayley or Miss Seward. We will conceive her as a buoyant, happy girl. Some will perhaps say, Elizabeth Browning never could have been a happy girl. What! do we not remember how happy we were till—till when? That was not the time when there was a danger of some unhappy question in every book you touched. Men lived much farther from the knowledge of human woes, and the more daring methods in which we now arraign Divine governments; and ordinances were not yet followed by system. Remembering what her life became, one lingers tenderly round the girl's years, soon and suddenly to close before her by a black, impenetrable veil. Those first years were passed alternately in London and near Malvern, among those wild and charming hills on the Herefordshire side. Her father had a country residence there, and thus, with her beloved brother, she followed her early and beloved studies, especially Greek. Her lines to her well-known teacher, Hugh Stewart Boyd, glance back to that time: they have often been quoted. 'The wine of Cyprus,'—but space forbids the quotation here.

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‘This tragedy nearly killed Elizabeth Barrett. She was utterly prostrated by the horror and the grief, and by a natural but a most unjust feeling that she had been in some sort the cause of this great misery. It was not until the following year that she could be removed in an invalid carriage, and by journeys of twenty miles a day, to her afflicted family and her London home. The house that she occupied at Torquay had been chosen as one of the most sheltered in the place. It stood at the bottom of the cliffs almost close to the sea; and she told me herself that during that whole winter the sound of the waves rang in her ears like the moans of one dying. Still she clung to literature and to Greek; in all probability she would have died without that wholesome diversion of her thoughts. Her medical attendant did not always understand this. To prevent the remonstrances of her friendly physician, Dr. Barry, she caused a small edition of Plato to be so bound as to resemble a novel. He did not know, skilful and kind though he were, that to her such books were not an arduous and painful study, but a consolation and a delight.

Returned to London, she began the life which she continued for so many years, confined to one large and commodious but darkened chamber, admitting only her own affectionate family and a few devoted friends (I, myself, have often joyfully travelled five-and-forty miles to see her, and returned the same evening without entering another house); reading almost every book worth reading in every language, and giving herself heart and soul to that poetry of which she seemed born to be the priestess.’



There is scarcely what can be called even a verbal allusion to all this in her published poems. Her writings, heaving as they do with wildest utterances, and the most passionate and burning words, make no reference either to the dreadful blow which struck her young life down in its vigour, and its hope and beauty, or to that dreadful bereavement which shook so cruelly the fair and fragile flower. Yet many of her writings look to us like the tortuous expressions of unrevealed sorrow. Affliction was certainly henceforth to be the angel of her verse; that angel struck all the chords of her heart, and they broke forth beneath the touch, in music most tender, eloquent, and awful. It belongs to those years to mention that readers were startled, from time to time, by the appearance, in two or three of the periodicals, of poems so new and original, so weird, so majestic in their expression, so calm in their up-springing over the passions which it was felt had first inspired them; one, especially—the ‘Romance of Margret,’ and its weird and ghostly refrain:—

‘It trembled on the grass  
With a low shadowy laughter,  
And the wind did toll, as a passing soul  
Were sped by church bell after;  
And shadows, ’stead of light,  
Fell from the stars above  
In flakes of darkness on her face,  
Still bright with trusting love.’

*Margret Margret.*

The curiosity was aroused, and they were at last traced to the sick chamber, where the broken body and broken heart of the sweet singer, Elizabeth Barrett, lay waiting for consolations which came to her with Divine strength from the hopes of the cross.

It was from such experiences as we have referred to that she acquired power to sing and to say,—

“And were it wisely done,  
If we who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth alone?—  
If we whose virtue is so weak, should have a will so strong,—  
And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from the wrong?  
To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love and Heaven,—  
A single rose, for a rose-tree, which beareth seven times seven?

“A rose that droppeth from the hand, that fadeth in the breast,  
Until, in grieving for the worst, we learn what is the best!”  
Then breaking into tears,—“Dear God,” she cried, “and must we see  
All blissful things depart from us, or ere we go to THEE?  
We cannot guess thee in the wood, or hear thee in the wind?  
Our cedars must fall round us, ere we see the light behind?  
Ay sooth, we feel too strong in woe, to need thee on that road;  
But woe being come, the soul is dumb, that crieth not on God.”

And we love much some of those pieces of our authoress which, while they do not at all touch those high questionings with which her Poems abound, by a sweet simplicity charm us with the life of the sick room, and its more solemn fears and thoughts. In those brighter days to which we referred, Miss Mitford had given to her—a dog. Dogs have often been honoured by immortality in poets' verses, but never did sweeter verses celebrate and do honour to canine affection. After some equally pleasant description of the body, most beautiful and distinct, of her loving friend, she proceeds:—

'Yet, my pretty, sportive friend,  
Little is 't to such an end  
That I praise thy rareness!  
Other dogs may be thy peers  
Haply in these drooping ears,  
And this glossy fairness.

'But of *thee* it shall be said,  
*This dog* watched beside a bed  
Day and night unwearied,—  
Watched within a curtained room,  
Where no sunbeam breaks the gloom  
Round the sick and dreary.

'Roses, gathered for a vase,  
In that chamber died apace,  
Beam and breeze resigning—  
*This dog only*, waited on,  
Knowing that when light is gone,  
Love remains for shining.

'Other dogs in thymy dew  
Tracked the hares and followed through  
Sunny moor or meadow—  
*This dog only*, crept and crept  
Next a languid cheek that slept,  
Sharing in the shadow.

'Other dogs of loyal cheer  
Bounded at the whistle clear,  
Up the woodside hieing—  
*This dog only*, watched in reach  
Of a faintly uttered speech,  
Or a louder sighing.

'And if one or two quick tears  
Dropped upon his glossy ears,  
Or a sigh came double,—  
Up he sprang in eager haste,  
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,  
In a tender trouble.

'And this dog was satisfied,  
If a pale thin hand would glide,  
Down his dewlaps sloping,—

Which he pushed his nose within,  
After,—platforming his chin  
On the palm left open.'

And so on, in words of pathetic humour, to the close.

To the same order of poetry, and to the same period, we must assign those well-known lines of exquisite tenderness and beauty now well known to us:—

THE SLEEP.

- Of all the thoughts of God that are  
Borne inwards unto souls afar,  
Along the Psalmist's music deep,  
Now tell me if that any is,  
For gift of grace, surpassing this—  
“*He giveth His beloved, sleep!*”
- What would we give to our beloved?  
The hero's heart, to be unmoved,  
The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,  
The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse,  
The monarch's crown, to light the brows?—  
“*He giveth His beloved, sleep.*”
- What do we give to our beloved?  
A little faith, all undisproved,  
A little dust, to overweep,  
And bitter memories, to make  
The whole earth blasted for our sake.  
“*He giveth His beloved, sleep.*”
- “Sleep soft, beloved!” we sometimes say,  
But have no tune to charm away  
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:  
But never doleful dream again  
Shall break the happy slumber, when  
“*He giveth His beloved, sleep.*”
- O earth, so full of dreary noises!  
O men, with wailing in your voices!  
O delv'd gold, the wailers heap!  
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!  
God makes a silence through you all,  
And “*giveth His beloved, sleep.*”
- For me, my heart that erst did go  
Most like a tired child at a show,  
That sees through tears the jugglers leap,—  
Would now its wearied vision close,  
Would childlike on *His* love repose,  
Who “*giveth His beloved, sleep!*”
- And, friends, dear friends,—when it shall be  
That this low breath is gone from me,  
And round my bier ye come to weep,  
Let one, most loving of you all,  
Say, “Not a tear must o'er her fall—  
*He giveth His beloved, sleep.*”



But things like these would not have given to this distinguished lady that great empire of fame she enjoys, and which will surely yet greatly extend. On far other, if not far higher grounds, she claims a place among the poets of our country. In a far different manner from any other poet she has wrought at her own being, seeking to express herself. The following sonnet finely conveys the poet's work, and thought, and intention. She has called it, 'The Soul's Expression.' What can we think of the critic who should misunderstand so very plain a thing?

'With stammering lips and insufficient sound,  
*I strive and struggle to deliver right*  
*That music of my nature, day and night*  
 With dream and thought and feeling, interwound,  
 And inly answering all the senses round  
 With octaves of a mystic depth and height,  
 Which step out grandly to the infinite  
 From the dark edges of the sensual ground !  
 This song of soul I struggle to outbear  
 Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,  
 And utter all myself into the air :  
 But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll  
 Breaks its own cloud,—my flesh would perish there,  
 Before that dread apocalypse of soul.'

We say what can be thought of the critic who should sneeringly say, although the *Edinburgh* is that critic, that we gather from it 'that she possessed so astounding a conception of the revelation concealed in this mysterious being, that she tells us that if she could disclose it the revelation would end in her own extinction ;' and that, finely expressed as it is, 'it is a most unmeasured assertion of her own spiritual value'? Indeed, it is not unfrequently the case we have to say to reviewers, 'Are ye blind also?' But in such a case as this is it not wonderful? What! do we not often say we must die to know? What! do we not know that as there is One whom no man can see and live, so there are truths which it is not lawful, that is, possible, for man or woman either to utter? There never was a spirit known to us on earth who soared so high as Mrs. Browning, and yet kept so truly along the great highway of the universe. But it was her wont and her habit to float high among the principalities and powers. We have no doubt that she laboured always beneath a painful sense of the inadequacy of her expression to her thought. Milton usually succeeded, but we know that sometimes he signally failed; and it is very possible to find in the *Paradise Lost* instances of expression in which the queer trots by the side of the sublime, and the grotesque ambles heavily through the spiritual machinery. We do not doubt

that it would have been easier for Mrs. Browning to have expressed herself on some of these occasions in Greek—her poems fell into Greek metres—and certainly there are times when she dashes aside all possibility of rebuke and strikes criticism dumb by the majesty of her language and her thought. We have a fine instance of this in what she has called, '*A Rhapsody on Life's Progress*.' This rhapsody also conducts life through seven stages here, in a measure wild and free, and plunging like advancing tides and retreating waves. She expresses what life is—the period of unconscious infancy, childhood, youth. Youth, realising life in love—manhood, realising life in strength; manhood realising life in thought, and again in act and idea; and then the close. Here is infancy:—

'We are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange!

We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery,

Which smiles with a change!

But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces;

The heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,

And we think we could touch all the stars that we see;

And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth:

And, with small childish hands, we are turning around

The apple of Life which another has found;—

It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,

And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four—

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore!

'Then all things look strange in the pure golden æther:

We walk through the garden with hands linked together,

And the lilies look large as the trees;

And as loud as the birds, sing the bloom-loving bees,—

And the birds sing like angels, so mystical fine;

And the cedars are brushing the archangel's feet;

And time is eternity,—love is divine,

And the world is complete.

Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond!

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!'

And here is youth:—

'And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures

Go winding around us, with roll upon roll,

Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures,

Which hideth the soul:

And we run with the stag, and we leap with the horse,

And we swim with the fish through the broad water-course,

And we strike with the falcon, and hunt with the hound,

And the joy which is in us, flies out with a wound;

And we shout so aloud, "We exult, we rejoice,"

That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,—

And we shout so deep down creation's profound,

*We are deaf to God's voice—*  
 And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears,  
*Yet we are not ashamed ;*  
 And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed  
 Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.  
*Help us, God, trust us, man, love us, woman ! " I hold*  
*Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold*  
 Growing bright through my fingers,—like altar for oath,  
 'Neath the vast golden spaces like witnessing faces  
 That watch the eternity strong in the troth—  
*I love thee, I leave thee,—*  
*Live for thee, die for thee !*  
*I prove thee, deceive thee,—*  
*Undo evermore thee !*  
*Help me God, slay me man !—one is mourning for both !"*  
 And we stand up, though young, near the funeral-sheet  
 Which covers the Cæsar and old Pharamond ;  
 And death is so nigh us, Life cools from its heat—  
 O Life, O Beyond,  
 Art thou fair,—art thou sweet ?

Was there ever expressed by any poet more nobly the life of Passion and of Man ? We must often have felt that Shakspeare's 'Seven Ages' very poorly expressed *our* experiences and our age. But what youth, what man does not feel that all the noblest has been expressed in many of these vaulting and magnificent lines ? Like the horse in Job they shout triumphantly, and say among the trumpets, 'Ha ! ha !' Yet from this very rhapsody might be quoted some lines exactly illustrating how the heat and the hurry of expression carried our authoress along. There are lines following which have often excited amusement, when man realises himself in strength :—

'Then we act to a purpose—we spring up erect—  
 We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness-steeds ;  
 We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked ;  
 We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,—  
 Strike the steel upon steel, strike the soul upon soul,  
 Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole,—  
 Let the cloud meet the cloud in a grand thunder-roll !  
*While the eagle of thought rides the tempest in scorn,*  
*Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn ?*  
*" Let us sit on the thrones*  
*In a purple sublimity,*  
*And grind down men's bones*  
*To a pale unanimity.*  
 Speed me, God !—serve me, man !—I am god over men !  
 When I speak in my cloud, none shall answer again—  
 'Neath the stripe and the bond,  
 Lie and mourn at my feet !"—  
 O thou Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet !'



Shall we give up that strange commingling of imagery in which we sit—

‘On the thrones  
In a purple sublimity,  
And grind down men’s bones  
To a pale unanimity?’

Absurdity has been assigned to these verses; on the contrary, they do express the imperial magnificence, the crude, machine-like uniformity of great cities, and many remorseless methods of alternately levelling the one to the multitude, or the multitude to one. It is a poet’s definition, but it is an admirable definition of the utilitarianism of our age. These were among our writer’s earlier and more passionate words. We confess we love her more, and feel our homage more awakened for her in her deeper, her more quiet, I will not say, her more Christian moods.

But the great distinguishing attribute of Mrs. Browning as a poet is the fulness of her Christianity. Christianity has, unhappily, become so vague a word that it is necessary to define, and so we say, that her Christianity is of the order of Cowper and Milton; it is that Christianity which is secured by atonement, and sealed by holiness—a Christianity in which Christ is on the cross, to overcome, and the Spirit is in the Church to purify and to console. We believe when she was young she was accustomed to sing some of the burning and magnificent words of Watts. We believe, too, that some of the faults of her style may perhaps be traced to that frequent verbal pomp in which our dear doctor often clothed his thoughts.

One of the earliest of the poems, the first in the present collection, is that entitled, ‘A Drama of Exile,’ in which poem our author has been charged with too bold a following upon the subject chosen by Milton. The boldness of our author only becomes a subject for criticism when the work has proved a failure, and that no one will say, or has, we believe, said, that the ‘Drama of Exile’ is. On the whole, the alternating measures are the very happiest of lyrical effects. It is a sort of ‘Paradise Lost’ and ‘Regained.’ We would have no objection to rest our claim for all that Mrs. Browning was and is to us in this noble poem. Her learning, her astonishing flexibility and variety of rhythm, the majesty and sublimity of her genius, and its pathos and melting tenderness. Among all the writers, too, who have painted the chief of fallen angels, not one has given a more vivid presentment of the—

‘Angel of the Sin,  
An idea to all souls,  
A monumental melancholy gloom  
Seen down all ages.’

The theology is high and great, worthy of a disciple of Howe, or Taylor, or Edwards. How noble is this, when Lucifer sneers at the idea of the creation of the race of man to fill the thrones of heaven, made vacant by the Fall! Gabriel answers:—

‘Angel, there are no vacant thrones in heaven  
To suit thy bitter words; Glory and Life  
Fulfil their own depletions; and if God  
Sighed you far from him, His next breath drew in  
A compensation splendour up through skies,  
Flushing the starry arteries.’

What finer summary has ever been given of the story of all evil than that one comprehensive line, ‘The Blast of the Lost Angel upon Earth’? Our writer in a too eminent degree, some think, possessed that power by which all things become homologous, and flowers and creatures, of all forms and degrees of life, seem to throb with human emotions. Some perhaps may object to what seems to us the boldest certainly, and bold as it is, the not less noble image, in which Christ, the tamer of Lucifer, masters and surprises the steed of Death. We have read of Him, ‘the Word upon the white horse;’ we have read of ‘Death upon the pale horse;’ but this is another picture:—

‘Wild is the horse of Death,’

pawing the earth’s Aceldama, the drear white steed; but one is found more bright than the crowned seraph, more strong than the cherub, elder than the most ancient angel; and he masters and surprises

‘The steed of Death,’

He leads him where he will,—

‘With a whisper in the ear,  
Which it alone can hear  
Full of fear;  
And a hand upon the mane,  
Grand and still.’

He leads the steed of Death through the assembled hosts of the grave; amidst the curdling darkness he leads him, right up the steep of heaven, through the rings of the planets, in the midst of the pallid moons and the stagnant spaces; he leads the horse of Death up amidst the angels, pale with silent feeling. Cleaving all the silence, cleaving all the glory, he leads the horse of Death, the mystic courser, to the very foot of the throne, and then the beast staggers, and

‘By life essential the phantasm Death expires.’

This is surely imagination justified by the imagery of Scripture, and bold to sublimity.

The following conversation between the first and second voice—Lucifer and Gabriel—is finely conceived, and the angels' choruses following after seem to us to be soul piercing in the tenderness of the words. At the same time, here is taught the great lesson of the poem—the doctrine that man, wandering from paradise the weary way of the race, is exiled, but not lost. Lucifer in all things is overmatched and circumvented. The first and second voices represent respectively Lucifer and Gabriel:—

*First Voice.* Gabriel, O Gabriel!

*Second Voice.* What wouldst thou with me?

*First Voice.* Is it true, O thou Gabriel, that the crown  
Of sorrow which I claimed, another claims?  
That HE claims THAT too?

*Second Voice.* Lost one, it is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile from His Heaven,  
To lead those exiles homeward?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile by His will,  
As I by mine election!

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That I shall stand sole exile finally,—  
Made desolate for fruition?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* Gabriel!

*Second Voice.* I hearken.

*First Voice.* Is it true besides—  
Aright true—that mine orient Star will give  
Her name of "Bright and Morning-Star" to HIM,—  
And take the fairness of His virtue back,  
To cover loss and sadness?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* Untrue, Untrue! O Morning-Star! O MINE!  
Who sittest secret in a veil of light,  
Far up the starry spaces, say—*Untrue!*  
Speak but so loud as doth a wasted moon  
To Tyrrhene waters! I am Lucifer—

[A pause. Silence in the stars.

All things grow sadder to me, one by one.

*Angel chorus.*

Exiled Human creatures,  
Let your hope grow larger!  
Larger grows the vision  
Of the new delight.  
From this chain of Nature's,  
God is the Discharger;  
And the Actual's prison  
Opens to your sight.

*Semichorus.*

Calm the stars and golden,  
In a light exceeding:



What their rays have measured,  
Let your hearts fulfil !  
These are stars beholden  
By your eyes in Eden ;  
Yet, across the desert,  
See them shining still.

*Chorus.*

Future joy and far light  
Working such relations,—  
Hear us singing gently—  
*Exiled is not lost !*  
God, above the starlight,  
God, above the patience,  
Shall at last present ye  
Guerdons worth the cost.  
Patiently enduring,  
Painfully surrounded,  
Listen how we love you—  
Hope the uttermost—  
Waiting for that curing  
Which exalts the wounded,  
Hear us sing above you—  
EXILED, BUT NOT LOST !

[*The stars shine on brightly, while ADAM and EVE pursue their way into the far wilderness. There is a sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel.*]

But to what other writer shall we refer since Job—shall we say, or Dante—who, in the spirit of the teaching of the highest and most sacred lessons, has so crowned and consecrated sorrow—sorrow of the Divinest ? These pages sacredly alternate between the contending spirits of *Passion* and *Rest*. In these volumes are the wild utterancy of very vehement hearts : here is no indifference, here is no coldness ; this heart has reached this place by severe wrestling with the waves and the winds ; and then these passions are so deep—that is much, too ; the most of passions are in sight of our shore ; we can fret ourselves about very little things, but here indeed ‘deep calleth unto deep.’ How often we have to repeat to ourselves the Gothic parable—‘There were some birds once who lived in a spacious aviary. A bullfinch, rather proud of his wisdom, clapped a claw upon the feathers of a goldfinch fluttering from bush to bush, and said, “Do you know, friend, that we are shut up in a cage ?” “What do you talk of a cage ?” said the goldfinch ; “see how we fly about. That’s a cage where neighbour Canary is sitting.” “But I tell you,” said the other, “that we are in a cage too. Don’t you see there the wire grating ?” “Yes, I see one there certainly ; but look as far as I can see on every side, there is none.” “You can’t see to all sides.” “No more can you.” “But consider, then,” continued the bullfinch, “does not our master bring

us water every morning and put it in our trough, and strew seed on the ground? Would he do this if he did not know that we were shut up and cannot fly where we will?" "But," said the goldfinch, "I tell you I can fly where I will." Thus they disputed for a long time, till at length the canary called out, "Children, if you cannot settle it whether you are in a cage or not, it's just as good as if you were not in one." But it takes a long course of experience to attain to the philosophy of the canary; and indeed the pant for freedom is the strongest of all desires within us after all. It is remarkable enough that our writer was nearer to the repose and freedom of the canary when she was confined to her sick-bed, than when she was in better health, preparing her 'Aurora Leigh.' It would seem to us that she had attained to a deeper rest and tranquillity in her sick chamber in London than in her sunny Florence. Occasionally, but only occasionally, in those elder volumes, her words become bitter. The poems, more especially of the sick room, have the charmed air of the holiest resignation running over all the chords, and waking the music of 'Even so, Father,' from them.

What is the meaning of that word which is so commonly used among us—*morbid*—that most dangerous of all diseases? No doubt there have ever been morbid men, and the *religieux* of all nations have been famous for the slow, black, creeping blood. It is worth while attempting to discover the secret, for indeed there is no law of life that solves the mystery. A recluse is not necessarily and always a morbid man; nor is the man who lives in the eye of the world always a cheerful one—light and air, light and air; we know nothing better than these two Divine medicines; but even these need not only themselves, but their spiritual analogues—cheerful thoughts. Cheerful thoughts? But that, says the reader, begs the whole question. How can a man have cheerful thoughts who has them not? Besides, is it not now a settled fact, that creeds and theologies are dependent upon biliary secretions? We know not; but it is certain the highest and the holiest of these poems—those which it might have been supposed would have been most morbid—are not so. There is in her later poem, especially 'Aurora Leigh,' less passion and less rest, but more knowledge; indeed, where shall we find such a wondrous collection of wisdom—of aphoristic wisdom—concentrated into rich, and noble, and stirring lines, the strength of a very deeply-taught soul?

Some critics have instituted a comparison between Longfellow and Mrs. Browning; and there is a likeness, just the same as we may see between some old, richly-chased, antique Grecian vase—Grecian in mould, but in the handiwork of Benvenuto Cellini—

filled with clear crystal water, and—what claims the likeness? Why, the ocean—calm, and resting, and finished. Longfellow is all that we can desire, as long as he is Longfellow; but you know what we said we felt as we turned our face to the fire. There is more than that; it is very beautiful! And this we will admit. Longfellow speaks up to his gift—a real authentic message from the land of souls. But—but on—the ‘buts’ are infinite and innumerable; hence the chatting of Longfellow is far better; he engraves his base better than Elizabeth Browning, for he possesses what he has more truly; that is the difference ever between passion and repose. In passion—in it, as in a state, we are possessed; in repose, we ‘possess our souls.’ Great possession! But, then, something also is to be said of the vastness or the narrowness of the soul. It is easy for some souls to possess themselves—no great possession after all, we say—hence the perfect handling of an emotion is not always the test of greatness. What is the emotion, and what is the depth of it? We quoted some time since the ‘Rhapsody of Life’s Progress.’ Well, Longfellow has a ‘Rhapsody of Life’s Progress’ in *Excelsior*. How much more simple, popular, easy, perfect, is Longfellow than Mrs. Browning. But which says most, sinks deepest, soars highest? And there is a verse in ‘Bertha in the Lane;’ how high it reaches, how much it takes of experience to sing, that—

‘Jesus, victim, comprehending  
Love’s Divine self-abnegation.  
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,  
And absorb this poor libation;  
Wind my thread of life up higher,  
Up through angels hand of fire  
I aspire—while I expire.’

And the sonnets of Mrs. Browning show the holiest soul. What sonnets! In those the reader must look more for that rest of the jaded and weary spirit, the sick frame, and the bereaved heart.

We have left ourselves no space to enter into deeper criticism, no space to enter into a notice of many of the noblest verses, Between these two, however, the spirit of the poems constantly moves intense passion and profound rest—the passion of a noble human suffering heart, the rest of a calm and tranquil Christian soul at the feet of Jesus, singing or saying,—

‘Speak low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet,  
From out the Hallelujahs, sweet and low,  
Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet.’

The rhythm so strange, frequently the subject of such harsh criticism, represents this; it is as if the soul could not make words express the depth and the vehemence of the passion. It



will be said this being so is the fault of this versification ; be it so ; it is a great fault greatly illustrated ; doubtless, as Coleridge has well said, ' All harmony is founded on a relation to rest—on relative rest ; ' but the same, also, may be said of the noble discords which rise and swell and sweep themselves on, if possible, into the great river of calm ; and she was not able to become an unpersonal spectator of human woes ; the ' Runaway Slave at Pilgrim Point,' and the cry of the children, are not less than wonderful testimonies to this. In ' Isabel's Child ' is waged the same contest between the contemplative soul which rests and sees, and the anxious soul perturbed, and therefore darkened ; so also in ' The Rhyme of the Duchess May,' and in ' The Vision of Poets.' But in the very tempest and vehemence of the soul we see the clear shining of the silver wing which floats above the storm ; hence these Poems have been very dear to passionate hearts. There is a knowledge of the bruised reed and the smoking flax in them ; and there is a knowledge of the peaceable dwellings and quiet habitations ! They bear into larger souls and deeper experiences, and to more vexed questions, and intellectual surmisings, a consolation springing from the heights whence the consolations of Cowper was sprung. We have left ourselves no space to speak of much of this. We have left no space to refer to ' Aurora Leigh,' that marvellous mosaic of so much that is highest in poetry, with so much most improbable in fact, and even doubtful in the development of a social system.

At a somewhat advanced period of life, Elizabeth Barrett married Robert Browning, and for her health's sake lived thereafter in Florence. There, last summer, at the age of forty-two, she died. The great heart of the most glorious of Englishwomen sank into stillness. Her last words as her eyes opened into the light—' It is beautiful.' So long a sufferer, her fatal illness was but of a week's duration. The ' beloved ' sunk to sleep with her beloved ones around her. She died in Florence, in the house of the Casa Guidi windows, and she sleeps in the English burial ground without the walls of Florence. If we could dare to write an epitaph for that grave, it should only be to quote from her own ' Duchess May.'

' And said in under breath,  
All our life is mixed with death,  
And who knoweth which is best ?  
And I smiled to think God's greatness  
Flowed around our incompleteness,  
Round *our* restlessness, *his* rest '

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## II.

## DINNER TABLES AND TABLE TALKERS.\*

THESE two volumes suggest to us the picture of dining-tables, not only with what is on them, but with those who are round them. The first comprises many of the most affecting experiences of a diner-out. We presume the writer of these immortal truths is a *man*, if so, a man how interesting! 'Melancholy marks him for her own.' Like many of the choicest teachings of the age, this book is the result of deep and acute suffering. Our author reflects upon the deplorable delinquencies of the times in the department of gastronomy. He says, 'Among the whole tribe of women called cooks, there are not ten worthy of their salt.' This is a very harsh judgment upon the corporation of cooks; but still more solemn is the charge brought home to the womanhood of our land. Our author says, 'that *ladies* educated in the superficial places called boarding-schools, are taught to believe that the *art of cookery, which is their first and paramount duty*, is a degrading occupation.' A statement like this awakens a thrill of horror in one's breast. To think for a moment that the sex has so fearfully forgotten its first responsibilities! The unhappy man has not only lost all faith in cookery, he has lost all faith in human nature. We have the following sad account of a dinner-party:—

'There was also put on the table six silver side-dishes, containing—God and the cook only knew. Then there came the eternal boiled fowls and bill-sticker's paste. I forget what was at the other end of the table, but in the middle was a horse's tongue.'

Upon which entertaining little meal we have also the following note:—

'There is not a horse that dies in London, or within reach of it, that the tongue is not pickled and dried and sold as a Russian rarity.'

The unhappy man says, he seldom goes out to dinner without the impression that the meal has driven a dozen nails into his coffin:—

'In most places these impostor dinner-givers begin by calling on the Deity to sanctify the filth they place upon the table, and end by

\* 1. *Dinners and Dinner-Parties*. Chapman & Hall.

2. *Lives of Wits and Humourists*. By John Timbs, F.S.A. Two volumes. Richard Bentley.

3. *The Rhetoric of Conversation*. Richard Bentley.

turning up the whites of their eyes, calling upon the Lord to make them truly thankful for the stuff they have received.'

The author of this book has been invited to the most remarkable parties, and he sketches, in quite a remarkable manner, the people he says sure to be met with at an every-day English dinner:—

At these sort of dinners you are sure to meet great people. You are sure to meet some great person that has kept the party waiting for an hour, who announces his arrival by a thundering knock of half an hour's duration. You find his greatness is in his make-up—his shiny black sticking-plaster boots, his false hair, his false whiskers, his false everything. Most probably you may meet some noodle who has been knighted by mistake, or for services that nobody ever heard of, whilst governor of some uninhabited island, the Secretary for the Colonies thinking it the cheapest way of getting rid of him. He belongs to a club, which he is continually talking about, and sleeps in some street at the back of the Haymarket. And more than likely you may meet with some German baron, from Saxe-something, who is invited because he was once at the Queen's concert, of which he never forgets to talk; and the hostess and her daughters think it so very grand, and connects them with the aristocracy. Probably you may meet some person who has put up a drinking-fountain, who, in his humility, has not forgotten to emblazon it with his name and address at full length. As certain as eggs are eggs, you meet one of the six hundred and fifty-six that congregate at Westminster: and lucky if you don't meet two of them, who, to show their importance, and that they belong to the Legislature, begin by talk of the House and the lobby, and then get up the usual cross fire: the one will say how he received a deputation from the doctors and scavengers of Brighton claiming vested rights to all the cesspools; and the other will describe how Lord Palmerston held him by the button-hole, and told him that a strong mixture of sewage and sea-water was highly beneficial, and exemplified his arguments by saying that maggots were always found in good cheese, that flies invariably hover over a muck-heap, and that accounted for the swarms of Israelites at Brighton and other watering-places. As to females, you are sure to meet some fourth or fifth-rate women, pictures of awkwardness and ugliness, who have been to Court, but who had no more right there than the animals they dignify by the name of cook, and like the flies in amber, sets some people wondering how they got there. To a certainty, you meet stuck-up nobodies, that try to talk fine; they use large words to express small ideas. On one occasion the author heard a lady say "she could never depend on the integrity of her stomach." These carrion, in general, live in obscure lodgings; if they hear mention made of a mutton-chop, express an affected oblivious doubt of its meaning, and, in a patronising way, suppose that it is a mutton côtellette.



This is the spirit in which this book is written. We have felt a rich enjoyment while reading the bilious rubbish that our world was altogether a narrower one. We have felt happy in the thought that, as far as possible, we know what we eat and with whom we eat. We have also thought that to place upon the tables the chiefest of dainties, and to place round the table the most fashionable group of persons, is not all. Conversation is the salt and sauce of society, without which any dinner-table must be flat and tame indeed. Yet some persons are wholly insensible to all the charms of the table. Our readers remember the story of the Duke's cook. The Duke, for especial occasion, desired the first *chef* in Europe. Lord Seaford parted with his, on economical grounds. He came back; he would serve Lord Seaford, he said, for no wages at all rather than remain at Apsley House. 'Has the Duke found fault?' 'Oh, no! oh, no! But he hurts my feelings, my lord. Oh, he hurts my feelings. I serve him a dinner that would make Ude or Francatelli burst with envy, he says nothing! and I go out and leave him to dine on a dinner badly dressed by the cook-maid, and he says nothing! It hurts my feelings, my lord.' Yes, even the *artistes* of the kitchen have their emotions and desire our praise. But the power to praise depends on abandonment to the table. We are told that talk should only be the sauce between the courses. That great teacher, Thackeray, when partaking of a *matelote* of surpassing excellence exclaimed, 'Now, my dear fellow, don't let us speak a word till we've finished this dish.' That distinguished and illustrious man has a reputation not only for fiction but for cookery, and has discovered that a slight infusion of crab is a decided improvement to curry; gifted being! shining alike in both realms of taste.

So sadly in this world do the times, and manners, and usages of men change, that it is possible we may be writing for some who have never heard any mention even of that great institution in which was once enshrined the wit and the humour, the national good nature and mirth of the age in England. We allude to the immortal Beef Steak Club. That illustrious society was formed in a most interesting period of our country's annals. We believe the gridiron of 1735 is still in existence, and is to that fraternity what the lion, or the rouge dragon, or the Clarencieux are to the heraldic pride of our aristocracy. We believe, we say, that real gridiron is still in existence—a touching memory of the days of old. That eloquent symbol was engraven on the hearts and on the buttons of every member of the club, encircled by that eloquent motto, 'Beef and Liberty'—venerable institution! The beef was regarded as the grosser ligament,

holding, as in a sacred bond of unity, the fraternity. Thus ever seems it that the soul within us can only be kept alive by the thought of the table, and we need the grossness of the appetite to kindle the play of fancy, of feeling, or of fun.

In fact, there seems to be no doubt about it, if we may say, without being misconceived in these days of misconception, to dine is the chief end of man. To this grand test of our social standing all our cares and arrangements lead—the honeymoon over, the connubial doves all sent to roost—the mistress and the wife settled in her new domain—to what do all her energies tend? To the preparation of dinner. We grant that the milliners and mantua makers are interesting, but they are personal, and how could the performances of those distinguished artists be exhibited without a dinner? Then the husband, how can his wandering and volatile affections be enchained but by clever contrivances for a dinner? Nay, how can social position be known, but by dinners? This is our national demonstration of affection. We cannot go beyond this—from the Prime Minister, or the Lord Chancellor, to the Town Councillor; from the dinner at Mivart's, so elegant and *recherché*, to the dinner at the well-known sign of the 'Frying-pan and Pot of Porter,' where beef-steaks and tripe fritters regale the savoury taste, this is our greatest national institution.

There is a kind of literature which may be called, we think, the literature of the dinner-table. It is the chronicle of the diners-out of society. Ah, there are many high priests of that profession; they live from table to table; the best-furnished tables of the land—tables thronged by the most illustrious personages; they are sought with avidity by all the noblest and loftiest personages, and not Spurgeon himself could more attentively study his pocket-book to note the engagements of a life of intense exertion and popularity, than do these contrive to edge in two or three parties for one evening. We see this in the life of Thomas Moore. What other life he led we are not told. His biography is one long dining-table; there is nothing heard but the crack of champagne-corks, and everything seen is beheld, by the light of wax candles; visions of blazing plate, and of liveried footmen, rise constantly to the eye, while it must be admitted a wonderful succession of good stories is shot off, and witty and funny things circulate round the table as rapidly as the glass. The first reflection one makes after reading all this is, what an immense monotony! what a severe bore it must be to live so—never, apparently, to know quiet or repose, and we do not see that there is anything in Moore's writing to lead to the thought that he ever got beyond the dining-room side

of human life. Doubtless it must be very entertaining and instructive, occasionally, to see life in the mansion and the palace; but not to find *in one* a home, only to go gadding about *from* palace to palace. What weariness like that! Why, those men look to us like the ancient Zany, at the table of the great, decorated in cap and bells—

Vanity Fair! Vanity Fair!  
Pray can you tell me who'll be there?  
Simper, and Prateapace. Brazen Stare,  
They'll be there! they'll be there!

Such tables justify George Selwyn's ejaculative soliloquy between the courses, 'Oh dear! how many toads have been eaten off these plates;' while again, three-fourths of the conversation would do for the school of scandal, and sometimes might indeed bring into near light Sydney Smith's description of a dinner at Samuel Rogers', when the candelabra were hung rather high: 'It's all light above, and darkness and gnashing of teeth below.'

Thus we see that some men belong essentially to Vanity Fair—to such men 'all is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Such people find all life to be a mere lisp of sentiment; life is to them a bottle of Eau de Cologne, and if by any chance the bottle is upset, they instantly assail the very moral government of God. Such people contrive to get through life with 'a little illness and a great deal of complaint;' 'they are obstinate about a hash, and arbitrary about an oyster, and their tempers spare neither man nor beast in the east wind of their selfishness.' So they have just enough of character to amount to 'obstinacy—that virtue of little minds.' And one of the great mistakes still is the reading of the whole of the human race from our own view of it. What! is there no heroism because our friend 'Captain Costigan was not only brave, but knew it, and liked to take out his courage and give it an airing, as it were, in company'? Are there no excellencies because 'Mr. Earwig is so keenly alive to the frailties of his fellow-creatures—like the man who thought it a greater proof of philosophy to discover the spots on the sun, than the laws which regulate the sun itself'? Are there no noble women because you see some Lady M'Flirt 'flitting about like a butterfly in a dark lanthorn'? No! it shall not be decided so. The great mistake in Vanity Fair ever has been the attempting to satisfy this immortal being with the husks that the swine do eat, or decorating the body with the paste diamonds of ambitious gentility—the perishable. We confess, to us, one of the most sadly sorrowful of all sights is to behold the brave Sir Walter Scott spending his



health, his brain, his mighty and magnificent soul, in order that he might take his rank with the feudal lords of the land. We believe it is a matter of very old dispute and discussion, whether it is better to possess a paradise, in order that we may have the wherewith to dream of cabbages, or to confine ourselves to the bed of cabbages in order that we may dream of paradise. We all know Mr. Treakle, who only cares for wealth that he may enlarge his bed of cabbages; he has no thought of wealth as a means to taste, to religion, or to benevolence. It was given to us the other day to call on a friend, certainly not rich, but comparatively poor; he was only able to do one of two things, either adorn his walls with pictures containing divine ideas, suggestions to arouse and to inspire his love, or to adorn his floor with a carpet. He adorned his walls with pictures, and did not buy the carpet, and he has never been thought well of since in Vanity Fair. In low life, in Vanity Fair, we have known people deny themselves of comforts for a month that they might have some great gala which should last for two or three hours. But I have also known men deny themselves food that they might purchase books which should open new worlds to the soul, and they cannot understand such things in Vanity Fair. It is impossible to resist some such thoughts as these while we think of dinner-tables and diners-out.

Among the traditions which have lingered longest in the south of France is one—that once upon a time a man desired to know how he might obtain pleasure, wealth, and power, and he was told that in a certain pass of the mountains of the Pyrenees was a *saffron-yellow fly*, which he must catch if he would obtain wealth and power. The saffron-yellow fly was to be caught in a net made of the hairs nearest to the brain, which was to be dipped in sweat and blood. The seeker went to the mountain-pass and sought, and he saw the saffron-yellow fly, and he chased it for many days and nights over rock, and ravine, and thicket, and wood; his clothes were torn, his flesh was torn, but still he followed the fly. To his immense chagrin, he saw it settle on the roof of a shepherd's hut, and vain were all his efforts to dislodge it. Disappointed and mortified to find a shepherd so blessed, he set fire to the shepherd's hut, and the hut burnt down, the fly flew away, and the unfortunate seeker began his quest again. His quest was unsuccessful; but, at last, he saw a young ploughboy catch the saffron-yellow fly in his cap. The seeker was frantic; he seized a stick and killed the boy. He then indeed caught the saffron-yellow fly; but the fly stung him, and made him sad for the remainder of his days. He was very rich and very powerful; but he languished until he

died a lingering death. A fatal pursuit is that of the saffron-yellow fly.

There are two methods by which we obtain an entrance to men through what may be called the side-doors of their character. The one is by letters, confessions, and journals; the other is by their table-talk. Those who excel in the one seldom excel in the other; yet the qualities demanded for the first do not always unfit for the last. Usually, however, the table-talker keeps little in reserve among the elements of his character; while, on the contrary, our interest in the confessions, and journals, and diaries of men, if they have a deeper tone in their character, entirely depends upon their reserve to all others, and our reliance upon the confidential utterances to the paper. The table has been supposed to be the place where the man may be seen as he is indeed; and sometimes it has been thought the very last place where we could dispense with the conversation which brightens and adorns. Diogenes, we know, when invited to a great table, glanced over the whole array of dainties, and then rose and left the company, exclaiming in his rustic way, in allusion to the dainties, and delicacies, and wines, 'What a number of things there are in the world Diogenes can do without.' Thus Plutarch, in his 'Banquet of the Seven Wise Men,' says, 'Wise men may dispense with many things rather than the wisdom; do men come together merely to fill themselves as we fill bottles? for if the food be not good it may be left—and if the wine be not good we may drink water: but for a shallow and impertinent fellow you cannot escape him, he mars all mirth.' Sometimes, indeed, there is no escape on ship-board, or on a railway; but who would voluntarily stay to hear the discourse of a Pumblechook or a Wopsle, merely because they happened to be rich, or to be able to spread a table with services of silver and of gold, to press into their glasses the vintages of the world, or to please the palate with the most delicate *entrées*? There is not a worse sign for the moral health of a nation, for its robustness and its wisdom, than the departure from simple tastes in food; it accompanies the departure from simple tastes in truth and in morals. Occasionally, the conversation at the tables of the great would seem to be not of an edifying or delicate description. Thus we read in the work we have already quoted on 'Dinners and Dinner-Parties,' the following touching incident:—

'The author was present with a young lady who had been educated in the usual nonsense, when the footman entered and asked her mother if he could say a word to her in private; the mother answered that she wished no secrets, and desired him to speak out; he

hesitating, she bid him to say what he had to say. He replied, "I think it right to tell you, ma'm, that cook was drunk last night, and, in pouring out the soup from the saucepan into the tureen, was ill, and before she could turn her head away from it, part of her illness went into the tureen." Cook was immediately called up, but, of course, the brute stoutly denied it. However, there was no doubt of the fact; the footman said he did not like to disturb the party, so he wiped the edge of the tureen, and gave the soup a good stir. The lady, in great anguish, exclaimed, "Good Heavens! I ate some of it!" and, being highly indignant, was not very gentle either to William for stirring the soup, or the cook for her addition to it. The young lady listlessly exclaimed, "I ate some of it! but what a fuss you are making, mamma! You know we must all eat a peck of dirt before we die." This young woman had received a college education, and was finished at Brighton at £200 a year, besides extras.'

We have heard a great deal about the desirability of knowing all the little details of a great man's life. In modern biography that idea and necessity has fairly run to seed; and in Moore's life this foible of biography has reached the last extreme. And yet, what a man chooses to set down about himself does greatly illustrate the character of his life, and his mental habits. What were the emotions of a great man while being shaved? What reflections agitated the mind when deprived of appetite? What disappointment harrowed the soul when it found itself obliged to contemplate a dinner of mutton instead of venison? To chronicle the change of a necktie, or the loss of a pocket handkerchief; to register a sigh over the departure of a favourite cook; to hail the advent of green peas. It may be our weakness, but we have not thought it very essential to our conception of a great man to be made acquainted with these interesting particulars of his life; yet it is a fact that, for the benefit of future ages, these particulars are placed on record in the voluminous life of Thomas Moore. We find such *important* particulars as these: 'Oct. 15th, 1825; Bowles brought me back as far as Buckmill, where I eat a couple of cutlets and walked home. Sept. 8th; eat ice at the Milles Collonnes. 9th; eat ice at the Milles Collonnes. 10th; eat an ice at Tortoni's. 16th; took an ice with Lord John at Rachises.' In December, 1823, occurs an important entry: 'Asked the Phipps's to dinner, as Power had brought fish and oysters.' 'Dec. 5th; the Phipps's again dine with us to finish the fish.' 'Sept. 17th; called at Power's on my way to Shoe Lane, and felt such a *sinking in the stomach* that I stopped to dine with him.' Then, in another page, we are informed, in his journal, of an affecting event. He



says, on January 1st, 1823, 'The coat (a Kilkenny uniform) which I sent to town to be new-lined for the fancy ball to-morrow night, not yet arrived.' And, on the following day, this : 'Obliged to make shift for to-night by transferring the cut-steel buttons from my dress coat to a black one, and having it lined with white silk.' It may be from our own inaptitude and want of perception ; but we are quite unable to perceive that future generations will be materially benefited by such records as these ; and, in truth, we cannot be expected to hold any man very high in honour who condescends to make such notes as these.

There is no slight notice of him than escapes the Argus-eye of his vanity. He drank all notices of himself as a dram ; and he not only became intoxicated by the repeated dose, but he may be said to have been constantly suffering from the delirium tremens of his vanity. 'There was a flourishing speech of Shiel's about mein the Irish papers : he says, "*I am the first poet of the day, and join the beauty of the bird of paradise plumes to the strength of the eagle's wing.*"' He goes to a fancy-ball, and he only remembers one thing : 'There was an allusion to me as Erin's matchless son ; which brought down *thunders of applause and stares on me.*' He visited Ireland with the Marquis of Lansdowne. He records an extract from a newspaper : 'We observed Thomas Moore, of poetical celebrity, leaning on the arm of the Marquis of Lansdowne.' He is invited to attend a meeting, which he declined ; finds, however, that Lord John, Brougham, and Macintosh went, and he records his 'regret now that I lost the opportunity.' He went to a Roman Catholic chapel : 'Coming out, a great number of people in the yard assembled to *see me.* In the narrow passage leading into the street, a man nearly pushed me down ; asking me, at the same time, "Which way has he gone ?"' 'Miss Rogers was particularly agreeable. She mentioned that she had a letter from a friend in Germany, saying the Germans were learning English in order to read—who ? Milton, Shakespeare ? No—Lord Byron *and me.*' These are the records ; and they are illustrative of a life. In this way he was constantly engaged in administering to his love of approbation, as must be ever the case in such matters, at the expense of self-respect ; for it must always be thus in the proportion in which we indulge in vanity, we diminish the proper and necessary amount of nobility of character and pride.

And thus we are always reminded of our friend's interest in himself. To select the stories of the vanity of Moore would make a chronicle *too* spiteful and malicious. Moore, it has been said, reminds us in every page of what Johnson said of Richardson,

'That fellow could not be contented to sail down the stream of reputation without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar ;' he was always inventing expedients to tickle himself ;—and every page abounds in such ridiculous evidences. His self-importance is ridiculous. Once, at an assembly at Devonshire House, 'the Duke,' he says, 'in coming to the door to meet the Duke of Wellington, near whom I stood, turned aside first to shake hands with *me*, though the great captain's hand was ready stretched out.' He sees Sir Astley Cooper, and records 'how the illustrious surgeon apologised for giving such a man *as me* the trouble to come to him.'

Vanity is always the index finger of a very small dial. Why ? Because perpetual watchfulness over our own powers shows the narrowness of their dimensions. A vainer writer than Moore, I believe, it would be impossible to find ; we cannot draw any distinction in his case, as we do in some instances, between egotism and egoism, between the dwelling on self-evolverment and development, and the dwelling on the petty details, the then court dress of the body, and the sensation it created, with its velvet coat and steel buttons. Wordsworth was an egoist. He was an object of profound interest to himself, but it was his soul that was interesting ; and if he rejoiced in fame, it was delight to find his thoughts acting upon and influencing the thoughts of other men. It is very ludicrous, laughable to a degree, to find the great poet interested in his velvet coat and steel buttons. This is the record of one of our great diners-out—the life of Thomas Moore, by Earl Russell, is the most remarkable modern contribution to the literature of the dining-table. We have already said, from page to page we are conducted through one long series of dining-rooms and tables. It is a fine collection of the *Ana* of Vanity Fair. On some occasions, the illustrious Epicurean found all his friends out. He records, in one affecting page, how he wandered from street to street, in London, from house to house, finding all his friends out ; he was obliged to dine by himself alone at an inn, reflecting upon his painful likeness to the lines of Dean Swift :—

" On rainy days alone I dine,  
Upon my chick and pint of wine ;  
On rainy days I dine alone,  
And pick my chicken to the bone."

A man is known by the company he keeps ; his tastes reveal him. Moore determined to keep the company of the great ; he determined to pass his life and time among the titled and the noble. There are those who would rather be snubbed by a prince than honoured by a peasant. It is very easy to see that the

difference was great between Moore's actual and apparent circumstances. They are the curse of life and of the world, these appearances, 'our Social Fates,' as Helps calls them. Some of our readers remember, possibly, the translation from the Greek Anthology :—

'A dealer in cabbage and rue.  
Oh! Stephanus once was his name;  
But as soon as so purse-proud he grew,  
Philostephanus then he became.  
Five letters have swollen out that name  
And his pride may come to this pass;  
That soon he may alter the same,  
To Hippocratippidias.  
Yet though should he call himself even  
*Dionysiopeganodorus*,  
In his 'Edileships' book he is plain Stephen,  
Now strutting so stately before us.'

We are afraid there was this constant *effort to appear*. In this, Moore was only one of the thousands—the millions—who are constantly edging their way—elbowing and nudging their way through the crowd to the best booth in Vanity Fair. But it is more deplorable when it is a literary man who leaves his study and avocations, which would seem fascinating beyond all the glitter, the tinsel, the gewgaws, and the well-dressed mob frequenting that great broad highway, or crushing round the tables of Belgravia.

Shockingly tawdry and worthless is the biography of James Montgomery, which is a wretched attempt to Boswellise a dreary collection of table-talk, by Everett, the Methodist Preacher. Both this and 'Moore's Life' belong to the 'Waste Paper Remains.' In Montgomery, indeed, most from his own pen commands our respect; but his biographers unfortunately felt themselves to be of the same importance with their hero. There is no conscience in such biographers; things are inverted strangely in these days: memoranda which the authors would have consigned to the trunk manufacturer, or the butter-shop, are elaborated into seven and eight volumes. We ask a life of a man, and some literary executor publishes the miscellaneous contents of the trash-basket found beneath his study-table.

Has not the table-talk of SYDNEY SMITH been amazingly over-rated? Cheerful, certainly—funny, undoubtedly; a rollicking, good-humoured display of a very jolly, thoughtless parson, of whom the best thing we can say is, that he had just the measure of conviction sufficient to make a very useful country squire, and a radiant practicalness and force of character, which would have made him admirable upon the Whig benches of the House of Commons. That he had powers fitting him to be more



than this, there can be no doubt; but those powers were not cultivated. Something of them, indeed, appears in his 'Lectures on Moral Philosophy.' There is nothing in the conversation which you would call great: he was a man with a marvellous flow of animal spirits, and in every company gives the appearance, from all records, of being the droll. One might suppose that he not only never thought seriously or felt seriously himself, but that where he appeared, thought also was forbidden to others. His conversation was pyrotechnic, and everything in his life gives the idea of a man who not only liked squibs and crackers, but one to whom a squib was not only a far finer thing than a rocket, but even than the majestic conflagrations of Vesuvius—than the calm and bewildering lights of the midnight heavens. He said that the art of dining was in being a good conversational cook—one who says to his company, 'I'll make a good pudding of you! it's no matter what you came into the bowl, you must come out a pudding.' 'Dear me,' says one of the ingredients, 'wasn't I just now an egg? but he feels the butter sticking to him,' &c. &c. But was Smith himself a good conversational cook? Other speakers had little opportunity of displaying their power. The flavour of his spice quite destroyed all the other functions of the pudding.

It seems something shameful to speak with any degree of slight of so cheerful a creature; and if we do so, it is only to qualify the amazing admiration with which his name is mentioned—the almost universal worship he has inspired. To laugh is not the highest end even of the wit—to produce incessant convulsions of laughter is surely not the end of the wise man. Even when his wisdom reveals itself by the powers of the humourist or the satirist, fun and drollery are the lowest round and reach of their dominion. We have heard clowns who have possessed in a remarkable degree these gifts: it will be granted that the degree in which Sydney Smith possessed them was altogether remarkable: he respired puns. He had but to open his lips, to drop some of those funny conundrums of speech—all words upon all subjects happened into ludicrous combinations with him. He was a walking volume of 'Punch,' always passing into a new series or a new edition, revised and improved. He never passed beyond 'the visible diurnal sphere'—a comfortable man, shrewd and penetrating. We would always have listened respectfully to his advice about the disposal of moneys, or the pacification of cities or kingdoms; but the last man in the world we would have desired to hold a serious conversation with, or to see by a death-bed.

It will be a question whether there were not among Sydney

Smith's contemporaries talkers even more pungent and brilliant; the principle characteristic of Smith was the overflowing sea of fun through which his speech constantly sailed. Douglas Jerrold and Samuel Rogers were both table-talkers of uncommon brilliancy, and it must be admitted that the spices of their speech were very bitter, yet they never indulged in the rich and racy nonsense of the clergyman, who among wits may pass exactly for what Ingoldsby was, or is, among poets. Smith was more healthy, more buoyant; it must be admitted that both Jerrold and Rogers impaled upon the spear-point of a rapid and sharp talk. A not very deserving character had frequently been aided by subscriptions to keep him from pecuniary difficulties, when an appeal was made again. 'Well,' said Jerrold, 'how much does — want this time?' 'Why, just a four and two noughts will I think put him straight.' 'Well, put me down for one of the noughts.' It was to Lord Brougham that Rogers muttered, when he had offended Sir Philip Francis by attributing to him the authorship of the 'Letters of Junius,' 'If he be Junius, he must be Junius Brutus.' It may be truly said, however, that the table-talk of which we have heard most, has been a rapid juxtaposition of nonsensical ideas. None of the table-talkers among the great seem to have been blessed with any great measure of reverence; we laugh, but what are the things recorded for? Erskine used to say, that 'when all secrets should be revealed, we should know the reason why—shoes are always made too tight.' Foote was talking away at a party, when a gentleman said to him, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Foote, but your handkerchief is half out of your pocket.' 'Thank you, sir,' said Foote, 'you know the company better than I do.' There seems a very little in a million things like these to justify the niche of fame they occupy. We have already said they are like the little bright brass-headed nails of speech, fastened by these masters of assemblies; these are the witty men of great self-possession; men of sparkling fancy, represented in the last age by the Walpoles, and Selwyns, and Chesterfields; and in the present age by those whose names we have mentioned; their discourse, and especially the discourse of Sydney Smith, was a kind of sparrow shot: they all lived to be amused; not one of them, excepting Jerrold, whom we except from the list, knew what it was to work; they spent their days from drollery to drollery; they were the apostles of the dining-table—hence their whole talk abounds in the sharp and pleasant fencing with guarded swords. What claims have any of them upon any of us? the very laughter is not honest; it is no very remarkable thing to make us laugh. What is the quality of their laughter? The

exhibition of monkeys in the Zoological Gardens is laughable; yet the world has it all its own way, and insists upon it that there is no wit, or pleasantry, or facetiousness, but in its own saloons, where conversation is made a kind of science, and is studied as an art; and where the repartee of the old French wit is realised. It is a difficult matter to make a good impromptu! I believe, for my part, that none are good but those that are made at leisure. On the contrary, some of us believe, or desire to believe, that table-talk is natural talk—it is the revealing talk; it is a sympathetic time when mind and heart sit at ease and in their undress; minds deconventionalised—when, if ever, the varied stores of feeling and of thought are all wondrously realised.

There are some houses especially chronicled in the annals of table-talk. There are especially two in the higher walks of life. Famous is that house you pass on your right hand on your way through Kensington—Holland House. Who does not remember the eloquent description of it, and of its entertainments by Macaulay—and its amplification by Talfourd? It is much to have a table at which to talk. Holland House, not for the gilding, the antique chambers, the avenue, the terrace, the library-shelves loaded with the varied learning; but the company—men who guided the politics of Europe; great orators and artists; and that benignant nobleman—that beautiful woman, statesmen, artists, poets—Wilkie, Mackintosh, Macaulay, Talleyrand, and, indeed, all whose names were a passport to fame! Shall we never have a lengthy description of the house in St. James Street, and its treasure—even the house of Samuel Rogers? If Lord Holland was the Lorenzo the Magnificent—then Rogers was the Mæcenas of our times. There were the richest treasures of art, choicest Guidos and Titians; more Catholic, and less exclusive than Holland House; there Erskine told the story of his first brief, and Grattan of his last duel; there stood the Iron Duke when he described Waterloo as a battle of giants; there Chantrey, placing his hand on a mahogany pedestal said, ‘Do you remember a workman, at 5s. a-day, came to your door to receive orders for work? I was that workman!’ There Thomas Miller said, ‘Do you remember purchasing a basket of peculiar manufacture of a poor man at your door? I was that basket-maker!’ And it was there that Byron’s intimacy with Moore commenced over the famous mess of vinegar and potatoes. This is in the active world; but we have seen others. Such a table as that at Bowood—the long room—its noble terrace, its domed ceiling, the pictures, the busts, and the carved work, and the old bridge, and the lake.



No doubt here is all that aids talk. Everybody must feel the difference between all conversation in the town and the country. Yet the plainer table of Charles Lamb has wondrous attractions. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Godwin, Haydon, Judge Talfourd, have brought that quiet room most pleasantly and vividly before us, and with the place, a tone of talk of altogether another description to that which gleams in the vivid and brilliant scenery of the aristocratic saloons.

But these men were not the lords of conversation. Some men, in any company, assert their royalty immediately—we do not mean in the mock-heroic way, but naturally, not ludicrously. Rogers said, that Mrs. Siddons asked for a knife at table, as if asking for the dagger in *Macbeth*, 'Give me the dagger!' 'Give me that knife!' Like the country magistrate, who, going to a trial, and being amazingly impressed at hearing the sentence of death pronounced—when returning to the bench, and having a fine of one-and-sixpence to inflict, or to commit to jail, said, 'You will pay this fine of one-and-sixpence,' and taking very heedlessly, we think, the name of the Highest in vain, exclaimed, 'and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!' Serious conversation, as it is called, may often impress us thus ludicrously, rather than solemnly. But the table-talkers are various in type, some are simply garrulous, the talkers of society who talk and talk, and yet have nothing to say; the idlers, the hangers-on of society, the good-natured, or the bilious man with nothing to do; then there are the scandal-mongers, who always have a story of somebody, and never a good word in it. We may leave all these people, and think of conversation as one of the necessities and charms of life, and social existence, as it also may become one of the pests and social nuisances.

The talk of Coleridge would never have been tolerated at Holland House. It was a kind of monologue—a golden monologue. He, indeed, of all men might claim to be the Chrysostom of table-talkers. Some, indeed, have charged upon that talk its desultory indeterminateness. No doubt it frequently wanted point. Nay, say some, it was sometimes impossible to understand him. To his discourse might have been applied his own description of a dark night.—'It was dark; it was pitchy dark; so dark that even the cats ran against each other.' Yet the volume of his Table-talk does abound in very clearly expressed and defined opinions; but in the flow of it it was like the sea. (Old Q) the Duke of Queensbury, once in the company of Wilberforce, at Richmond, looking out upon the Thames, said,

'There it is ; it flows, it flows, and flows ! I see nothing in it.' Very honest and natural of the voluptuous old abomination ! The same has been said of the talk of Coleridge. It is true here, also, that 'we receive but what we give.' And there are fine and true and altogether infinite things which we do not understand. What a monologue the sea is in its march of thunder on the shore ! What a mysterious monologue is music ! So with the speech of some men—they use language so as to give the sense of grandeur and of mystery. What is it all about ? There are talkers of whom we say this ; we might say the same thing of landscape ; and yet we can see a tree and a field ; we cannot make out the mystery. But there is a light in all highest things, even as in all highest things there is so much that is misunderstood. What is the relation of the soul to a scene, or to a starry night ? We know not. Even so, often in the meandering flow of Coleridge's talk, in such speech one sees, or seems to see, the soul stepping out of its environment of clay, as it will ever attempt to do. Even as we said of the sea—its vast horizon rolls before us ; but there is plainly defined the dotting island, and the tall crag, the golden suffusing light, and the pomp of cloud in the glorious and gorgeous heavens. True some will say, 'How dreary, how vague !' Yes, there is much here of 'the roaming about in worlds not realised.' Perhaps we have little to regret that the conversations of Coleridge were not taken in shorthand. Well, he never could have had a Boswell ! He could not have been dramatized ! it was, beyond anything we have of speech, the flow of thought attempting to make itself clear and known, uncorrected ; it was mind at sea, mind on the sea ; now shivering in spray ; now wildly reflecting the lightning, and now the stars, and melting in the golden mist.

Of course, the name of Johnson rises immediately to the memory as one of the lords of conversation ; yet he too was one of those who monopolised, who used language like a mace, and struck down all opposition with it. Perhaps it is the case with conversation, that the most happy and pleasant is the least striking. We have only the sense of the great pleasure conveyed in Johnson. We are certainly held by the sense of wonder and admiration at the succession of those felicitous audacities—some, indeed, more relieved from the stern dogmatism of manner than others, but all partaking of it in a very large degree. Thus his denunciation of Hume's theory of happiness :—

"Sir, that all who are happy, are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied*, but not equally

*happy.* Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher." I remember this very question very happily illustrated in opposition to Hume, by the Reverend Mr. Robert Brown, at Utrecht. "A small drinking-glass and a large one (said he), may be equally full; but the large one holds more than the small."

'Somebody said to him, "How do you feel now your tragedy's lost?" "Like the Monument." Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine, because I could not bear it! I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." Boswell: "Why then, Sir, did you leave it off?" Johnson: "*Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine till I grow old and want it.*" Boswell: "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." Johnson: "*It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure: but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational.*" Boswell: "But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." Johnson: "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." Boswell: "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have." Johnson: "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. *Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember, an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to bind, in order to get her back from savage life.*" Boswell: "She must have been an animal, a beast." Johnson: "She was a speaking cat."

His criticisms on Foote were very characteristic :

'Boswell: "Foote has a great deal of humour." Johnson: "Yes, Sir." Boswell: "He has a singular talent of exhibiting character." Johnson: "Sir, it is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers; it is farce, which exhibits individuals." Boswell: "Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?" Johnson: "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off." Boswell: "Pray, sir, is not Foote an infidel?" Johnson: "I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say,



he has never thought upon the subject." Boswell: "I suppose, sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind." Johnson: "Why, then, sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him. Did you never observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small bit of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him."

Some table-talkers are great because representing some great central opinions and revolutions. The opinions of their free hours and moments are most important; in them they fire their friends and disciples; amidst their festivities the soul of active life blazes forth; they are statesmen over their cups; they mark out a line of action round their plates; and their table becomes a confessional, a consistory, or a council of war. Such, in some measure, was the table-talk of Luther. How constantly reflecting the moods of the man's own mind, variable and deep, stormy and calm! Sometimes it is like some great spiritual animal talking—coarse, vehement. He was never in the clouds, seldom indulged in the long dissertation; so, on the contrary, his speech does not abound in the sharp and brilliant points of expression. Yet his table-talk would seem to be very like his preaching—it was overflowing talk—rousing, solemn, musing, brooding talk. Perhaps, to every highly successful talker and orator, there is essential the strong broad base of an animal nature. Ideas alone, even ideas clothed in the drapery of a rich and imaginative expression, are not sufficient for the crowd; some personality, some individual interest, some sting of talk, some vehement identification of the speaker's self with the crowd. There was all this in Luther. It was not information like that we find in Selden—it was not ethereal, wandering through nebulous star-dust like that we see in Coleridge—it was not insolent and overbearing like that of Johnson—it was, indeed, like the talk of a great human child! What talk it is—what strength, what courage, what common sense, what utterly ridiculous superstition, what stories of the devil and of witches, what cheerful garrulousness, what moody biliousness, what humour, and what humours! We all along see the spirit with which, in one sentence, he exclaims:—'I have often need in my tribulations to talk even with a child in order to expel such thoughts as the devil possesses me with.' And again, 'When I am assailed with heavy tribulations I rush out among my pigs, rather than remain alone by myself. The human heart is like a mill-stone in a mill; when you put wheat under it, it turns, and grinds, and bruises the wheat to flour; or if you put no wheat

it still grinds on, but then 'tis itself it grinds away.' And this is the secret of the talk of this great soul. Of all the table-talkers, there is most humanity in him; most that with humanity gives also the feeling of the earnest, apostolic man.

We shall, perhaps, surprise our readers, when we avow our belief that the lord of modern conversation most nearly approaching to Johnson, but in many things far surpassing him in conversational powers, was Robert Hall. He had that rapid nimbleness of fancy and imagination, seconded by a vehement rapidity of language. His estimate of a very popular author was good, if not just:—'Sir, he has set out on a race after obscurity; and, sir, he has overtaken her.' Again, on a pleasant ride with Mr. Green, as the great preacher's eye glanced over the sun setting beneath the waves, he exclaimed, 'Only look, sir: that mild silvery light on that expanse of waters! why, sir, it looks as if they were preparing for a magnificent public baptism, and the whole of the hundred and forty and four thousand described in the Revelations were about to descend into the waves!'

We believe Robert Hall was the finest of all our table-talkers. He was in conversation what he was as a preacher: rapidity, imagination, wit, and force—he possessed these in a large degree. Somebody said, 'No doubt in a future state the powers of the human mind would be enlarged to an indefinite degree.' 'What's that, sir? What's that?' The question was repeated. 'Why the mind more than the body, sir?—the body undergo this frightful increase? then we should have a man whose nose would perforate the sun, his chin stretch across the Atlantic, and battles fought in the wrinkles of his face; none but a fool could believe that, sir!'

He was unhappy in his courtship of Miss Steel. When he was perhaps smarting beneath the disappointment, he went out to tea. The lady of the house said, with no very good taste, 'You are dull, Mr. Hall; we have no polished *steel* here to entertain you.' 'Oh, madam, that's not the slightest consequence; you have plenty of polished *brass*!' On another occasion, when some rumour of marriage had gone about, he broke out decidedly at once, 'Sir, sir, marry Miss——, sir! I would as soon marry the devil's daughter, and go home and live with the old folks.' His genius for happy retort never slumbered. One of his congregation, a sickly, querulous, old mortal, met him in the street. 'Ah, Mr. Hall, you have—never—been—to see me—sir. I've, I've, I've been very ill. I've been—at—Death's-door—Mr. Hall.' 'Why didn't you step in, sir? Why didn't you step in?' A timid man was the subject of conversation, when he remarked,

'Mr. — is so nervously modest, he seems always to be begging pardon of all flesh for being in the world.' Foster's distinction between Hall and Coleridge was very good. Hall used language as an emperor. He said to his word, go, and come, imperially, and they obeyed his bidding. Coleridge used his words as a necromancer, so aerial and unearthly were their embodiments and subjects.

Robert Hall never had an audience in the midst of which he could shine. How would his sudden and brilliant coruscations have astonished the brilliant companies of Holland House! Can we doubt for a moment that he had a genius for conversation inferior to none of the distinguished people who thronged there? He not only had a genius inferior to none, but he had faculties which would have placed him in a rank superior to all. He would never have condescended to the mere fun and frivolity of Sydney Smith; but he had a wit quite as brilliant, a point and force as pertinent and strong; while the range of his thought, and the fervour of his imagination, would have suggested topics of an incomparably higher character than those which relieved the monotony of dinner-table. It is very true that Christian ministers of Robert Hall's creed and complexion cannot join, or cannot feel at home, amidst the coteries of Holland House; and, perhaps, it must be admitted that his dignity was not of that cold, well-bred order which puts always the curb upon expression. His words, like the hoofs of prancing and curvetting steeds, struck sparks as he passed; and the sentences created the shock, not only of surprise, but of fear, and gave not only the fire and light of speech, but if often only the pleasantry, frequently the awe and wonder too.

We have fallen upon a very fruitful and suggestive topic, and one upon which it would be very easy to dilate through the whole of our number instead of through a few pages; and perhaps we have even at last missed the subject upon which we purposed to have exercised our pen—namely, the rarity of a good conversation. We had purposed to have lingered over some of those advantages which we might all derive did we more conscientiously and consciously guard the gift of speech, and especially speech in private by the domestic or the social table. No other occasion so truly reveals a man; it has been justly said, 'The mind is like a trunk; well packed, it holds almost everything; ill packed, next to nothing;' and the packing of the mind is displayed in conversation generally—the artifice of public speech is wholly unavailing there. In the work we have placed at the head of this article on the Rhetoric of Conversation, we have some admirable hints. It is, indeed an American work; it is full



of instruction upon the topic to which it refers. We must take exception to some of the opinions and criticisms in the text, and to some remarks of the excellent editor. But we must leave this subject of conversation for another paper. Those wondrous table-talks of the ancients—the banquet of Plato, or the Phædo, which may perhaps also stand in our thought by the side of other moments of conversation before death and martyrdom—the table-talk in the Prison of the Conciergerie, with the twenty ready to be offered in the morning on the guillotine, not at all an edifying last supper we think. And then reverently stepping aside to the Sacred Supper—to the last hallowed hour of the Master with the Eleven—surely with wonderful pathos revealing how hallowed a medium for highest intercourse a conversation may be, how sacred and holy even a meal may become.

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### III.

#### THE SABBATH.\*

**H**ERE is a most elaborate book on a subject having, strangely enough, few or no charms for the most of either authors or readers. The preparation of it cost the writer all the time he could spare from the duties of his sacred calling for a number of years. Had it occupied, not his spare moments only, but many years of uninterrupted leisure, well employed, we, for our part, should have felt no surprise, looking at the amount of work done, especially when with this we connect the serious discouragements which must have attended the doing of it, arising out of the inherent unpopularity of the matters treated of, and the unpromising state of the Sabbath cause, as well at home as abroad. It was only an earnestness and tenacity of purpose, potent enough to overcome those chilling drawbacks—only an earnestness drawing life from the felt importance of the views which he inculcates, and of that august institution which it is his chief aim to support—it was this, and this alone, which could have upheld so long the right arm of the composer, or issued in a production of which we have often been obliged to say, in the

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\* *The Sabbath Viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation and History, with Sketches of its Literature.* By the Rev. James Gilfillan, Stirling. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot and John Maclaren. London: James Nisbet & Co. Dublin: W. Curry & Co. Glasgow: M. Ogle & Son. Stirling: J. Hewit. 1861.

perusal, What a world of labour is here ! Yea, the discouragements considered, what a bravery of labour !

The contents of this moderate-sized, yet capacious volume, are arranged under five general heads, or books : 'Sketches of Sabbatic Literature and Controversies ;' 'Adaptations and Advantages of the Sabbath ;' 'Divine Origin and Authority of the Sabbath ;' 'The Sabbath in History ;' 'The Sabbath Vindicated ;' which are again distributed into so many chapters or sections, each according to their several natures, their chronologies, or the particular aspects under which they are viewed. From this analysis, however, no one who has not read the book can have any adequate idea of the number, nature, extent, and moment of the topics touched, handled, and illustrated in the course of it, owing to the comprehensiveness of its plan, which takes in the whole subject of 'The Sabbath,' as the title indicates.

Thus viewed, the work on our table differs from all others on the subject which have hitherto appeared in Scotland, or, indeed, any where, in our own or recent times ; the only book like it which we have seen, being one of Scottish extraction, so to speak, but born in a foreign country, speaking a dead language, and now hoary with years. We refer to a treatise in Latin, *De Causa Dei contra Anti-Sabbatarios*, by John Brown, minister of Wamphray ; who, driven from his parish, as were many of his compatriots from theirs, after the Restoration, found an asylum in Holland, where, beside other productions, comforting to himself and his fellow exiles, he brought out this on the Sabbath, in quarto, Rotterodami, 1674 and 1676, pp. 1800. Great, not in physical attributes alone, but in the ethereal properties of rare erudition, masterly logic, and, in short, intellect of a high order, Brown's treatise marks an era in the annals of Sabbatic bibliography ; being, in reach and fulness, wholly unmatched in any foregoing age. To this great work of his distinguished precursor, Mr. Gilfillan owns himself largely indebted. But, although only one-third the size, his treatise contains all, perhaps, that is of permanent value in the elder work ; while, borrowing assistance from some hundreds of other books, it includes a vast number of points and discussions which have no place in the latter, more especially as regards the great article of Physiology, a subject little understood in the 17th century, but here powerfully applied to the service of the Sabbath and the sanctuary. To examine the work before us with the attention due to it, and to this portion of it in particular, is more than either our space or leisure will at present allow. A few short and desultory notes must supply the place of a large and more methodical critique. Let us—

I. Glance at the arrangement. The reviewers differ, we perceive, with respect to this: one holding that what is said of 'the divine origin and authority of the Sabbath' ought to have taken precedence of every thing else; another, that this stands best where it is. For our part, we can see no harm in the writer assuming, as he does in the very first sentence of the treatise, the divine original of the institution, and postponing the illustration to what he deems, and what really is, (viewing it as a conclusion deduced from premises) a more fitting place. Exception also has been taken to another part of the arrangement, namely, the matters placed under 'Sketches of Literature and Controversies,' as compared with those ranged under 'The Sabbath in History,' the fault found being to the effect that there exists a substantial identity between the things, or some of the things treated of under both—an objection certainly not without foundation. It is but fair, however, to subjoin that where the materials to be disposed of are so vast and diverse as here, it is extremely difficult so to classify them as to prevent their interfering with, and running into, one another, as in the case which has been pointed out.

II. This book contains, as our readers doubtless have already inferred, a great storehouse, magazine, or treasury of information on the subject of which it treats: it is a Sabbath Cyclopædia, in which professional and other students of Scripture may find not certainly all that is knowable on the subject, or which would entitle the author with Lucretius to sing,

'Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,  
Omnia nos!'

but the nearest approximation to this which has been produced in any country, tongue, or period—a high compliment assuredly, yet, in our deliberate judgment, no higher than deserved.

In this connection it is proper to state, that the work stands in clamant want of an alphabetical index, the contents, as they now appear, being of little or no use for ready reference. Let the author supply this desideratum in his next edition, taking care to make it copious. It would be well, too, after the example of bygone and golden eras, to append a table of the Scriptures illustrated or quoted, that by this means 'the man of God may be thoroughly furnished,' as with other requisites, so also with weapons of war; for such a synopsis is to a book on theology, what a fortress is to a town; it is 'like the tower of David builded for an armoury.'

III. This is a volume which may be read with pleasure by persons of scholarly accomplishments. Himself a man of taste,



and not devoid of poetical fancy and feeling, the author, who is a brother of George Gilfillan, has taken care that his book shall not be one of those by which, to use the words of the illustrious John Foster, 'evangelical religion has been rendered unacceptable to persons of cultivated taste.' It is not such as have been many leaden books on the same subject, nor such as appear to have been some of those pointed to by Sir Philip Sidney in his 'Defence of Poesy' (Zouch's 'Life of Sidney,' p. 197) as maligners of his favourite art, and by Spenser in his 'Faery Queen' most justly stigmatised as having

'Feigned demurest grace,'

at the same time that they despised liberal learning and exhilarating verse. As if there was or could be discordance between 'divine poetry' on the one hand, and God's ordinance of the Sabbath on the other—an ordinance, the history of which is itself a poem the sublimest imaginable, the Creator resting and rejoicing over the works of his hands, and all his 'sons' hasting to keep holiday along with him; while its closing scenes (so far as displays of divinity on earth are concerned) are those of the Redeemer resting, rising, and ascending, sung by throngs of the same venerable choristers who officiated at the first commemoration. In harmony with a subject so instinct with ennobling thoughts as that of the Sabbath, Mr. Gilfillan has studded his work with gems of the purest water in prose and verse, some from the Hebrew bards, others from the Greek and Latin muse. One poet we miss whom above most we should have expected to find, namely, Du Barras, 'poets' pride and glory.' He was the French poet of the Sabbath in the time of his patrons, James VI. of Scotland and Henri Quatre. This omission is no doubt owing to the author not having given any formal account of the Sabbath in France, which he would do well to supply in his forthcoming edition.

Among the historical notices of the Sabbath, as observed in different countries subsequently to the Reformation, we remark, with singular pleasure, those relating to Scotland, and woven into a narrative extending from the earliest times down to our own. Matthew Craford, author of a 'MS. history of the Church of Scotland still preserved, and of printed writings, which praise Him in the gates,' was the first, we believe, to collect the earlier memorials of his country's Sabbath, which he embodied in his 'Exercitatio Apologetica,' printed at Utrecht, in 1669; but his account of it to that date is meagre in comparison of that here given to the public.

From the latter, it appears that views of the Sabbath founded

on Scripture obtained earlier and more extensively in our neighbour kingdom of Scotland than in any other Protestant country. Scotsmen have no reason to be ashamed of their Sabbath. Their literary monuments to it, and their long and valiant struggles to secure it, from the days in which Queen Mary reigned, to the year 1688, would do honour to the intelligence, piety, and patriotism of any people. And, as it cost them much, so to it, unquestionably, as affording weekly opportunity for the diffusion of Christian knowledge and the hallowing power of the pulpit, are they mainly indebted for whatever national distinction they possess. Scotsmen, of all people, ought to be ashamed if, to gratify their craving for sordid gains, their infidel conceits, or their enmity to vital Christianity, they are willing to impair, or even eager to destroy, a venerable and sacred institution. He who betrayed Sir William Wallace into the hands of the English did not commit a crime so execrable as they. Professing to admire and almost adore the principles of the British Constitution, as settled at the Revolution, only ignorance of the principles embodied in that *Magna Charta* can be the mother of their devotion to it. The great founders of British freedom well knew, and the author of this book forcibly shows (see page 208), that where there is no Sabbath 'there can be no religion or virtue at all;' and where there is no religion or public virtue, no security for either civil freedom or social order. Look across to France. French Sabbaths and French liberty! Is that the glorious liberty, that the political Millennium which they would have Britain to enjoy? Scotsmen they may be, but most unlike their fathers of renown, who honoured the law of God, and were honoured and blessed in return. Scotsmen they may call themselves, but they only misapply and profane the name.

V. To group sundry particulars into one category, this publication is well fitted to commend the good cause it seeks to promote. In the first place, advocating the generally received doctrine, the author is at the same time of a liberal and catholic spirit, which he evinces by patiently listening and giving all due weight to the arguments of such as oppose themselves. In the next place, on a subject so fertile of controversies, it is reinforcing to be told by one who has so fully investigated these, that 'there has, perhaps, never been a topic on which a greater number of the wise and good have been agreed, than the Divine authority, the sanctity, and the value of a weekly day of rest and prayer.' Well worthy of attention, also, is another great fact, clearly brought out

by our author's researches, touching the history of the Sabbath in England, and which is to the effect that in the seventeenth century orthodox views of the Sabbath were not confined to the Presbyterians of Scotland and the Puritans and Nonconformists of the South; on the contrary, in spite of the 'Books of Sports,' and the profligacy of the Stewart kings, a form of doctrine identical with that of the former was openly avowed and pleaded for by the most eminent writers and prelates that ever flourished within the pale of the English Church.

In fine, Mr. Gilfillan views the Sabbath 'in the light of reason and history,' as well as revelation. Proceeding on the supposition that the Lord of the world appointed the Sabbath, the scope and tendency of his whole production is to prove that all we know on the subject of the institution from sources other than the revealed, is in harmony with that supposition. Civil lifts her voice in concord with sacred story, in the manifold traces of the original appointment found in the memorials of ancient Pagan nations. Nor is even Nature silent on this great subject:

'Nature is Christian, and preaches to mankind.'

In the constitution she has given to man and the lower animals—a constitution requiring just such an amount of repose as is demanded by the revealed law, and proving to a nicety that He who made man and who made the Sabbath is one and the same being—in a word, the many and peerless benefits and blessings more or less enjoyed by the keepers of the fourth commandment, on the one hand, and the countless woes suffered by the breakers of it on the other—are all so many voices from Zion and from Sinai.

The line of argument followed out by our author is not only valid in itself, but will, we doubt not, prove confirming or converting to all who read the work with intelligence and candour. Certainly it is not likely to touch those who call themselves 'unbelievers on principle.' Their answer will be, 'It is all very well for you to believe in your fancied "adaptations and advantages," but we are not bound by your too large beliefs; we assert our freedom: your Bible has no claim on us. On the contrary, we hold it to be a tyranny on your part to deprive *us* of a seventh part of *our* time.' Lame and impotent conclusion! As if they were the creators and lords of time, in place of being what they really are—vassals of the Great Proprietor, his workmanship, his creatures, who have not a moment which they can call their own.

We close with a single passage, of more than common clear-



ness and force, which may convey to our readers an idea of the style and spirit of Mr. Gilfillan's book :—

‘The Sabbath is nearly as old as the creation. On the sixth day of time that work was completed, and its Author stamped the following day with his signature, in perpetual memory of himself as the Being by whose underived wisdom the vast undertaking was devised —by whose uncaused power it was achieved. Adam awoke from his first sleep to behold the light of the earliest Sabbath-day. Almost contemporaneous with the appointment of marriage, it might be said of the corrupters of the one as it was to the perverters of the other, “From the beginning it was not so.” Age, indeed, does not consecrate evil or magnify a trifle, but it imparts interest to what is innocent, and venerableness to what is great and good. We are commanded to ask for the old paths; and where shall we find older paths than the law of the Sabbath, and the way of salvation through the seed of the woman? The hoary head is a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness. Our Magna Charta is an ancient guarantee of civil rights, but neither in antiquity, nor in its own nature and extent, can it for a moment vie with the world-old and world-wide charter of a free seventh day, which the Creator hath given to the human race for all time. How many changes and catastrophes has it survived! Kingdoms have, in multiplied instances, risen and fallen. Systems of opinion on all subjects have succeeded each other in constant succession. The institutions of man have perished one after another. Religious ordinances themselves have fulfilled their temporary destinies and disappeared. But the Sabbath, like the perpetual hills, has outlasted the patriarchal altars, witnessed the decay of all other sacred monuments, survived the tabernacle, temples, and sacrifices of a gorgeous ritual, and, after the various fortunes of eighteen Christian centuries, is still as full of vitality and vigour as at any former period of its history. And we have reason to believe that, like the ordinances of heaven, it will live through all the ages of time. Nor will it end when the sun has ceased to run its course. Then, indeed, it will no more bless the men who shall be found to have preferred death to life—a lawless freedom to a holy rest. But there will “remain a rest to the people of God,” and for them the Sabbath will begin a brighter career, as the one day—the unchanging holy day of eternity.’

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## IV.

BALDWIN BROWN'S EXODUS AND PILGRIMAGE  
OF THE SOUL.\*

A BEAUTIFUL book, in which Mr. Brown makes the story of Israel's wanderings to reflect and re-present the history of the Human Soul; Mr. Brown 'believes that every man in a measure repeats, in his own experience, the experience of the race.' He is shocked—and well he may be—at certain modern notions about the Old Testament, 'as though the less we studied it the better, or as though it were the record of some Palæozoic age we do right to scorn.' He, on the contrary, believes in the early history of Israel, a story not terminating in itself. And who shall doubt that Mr. Brown is right? how can we do other than regard the history of Israel, in all periods of its development, as sublimely and most significantly representational? Egypt and Sinai, and Marah and Elim, and Kibroth-hattaavah, and all the halting-places of Israel on its long journey, are fraught with lessons. Mr. Brown's book needs a quiet reader. We do not think that it is too much for a writer who condescends to be our teacher to expect from us a certain measure of tranquillity and stillness—a yielding of the soul. How much benefit would any mortal derive from the ministry of the most spiritual and gifted teacher, if, instead of quietly receiving an influence, he querulously set himself to criticise and to oppose? This is just the state which is needed, this state of quietness, for the reception of any measure of good from this volume.

Mr. Brown conducts his readers far away from the clash of conflicting creeds—he finds human life in the wilderness; but he finds, also, God over and around and before the wilderness of human life. Persons who have not much sympathy with spiritual teaching will speak of the book as sentimental; indeed, it is altogether too strong a book to be the production of any merely sentimental writer. There are plenty of indications that the experiences which relate themselves upon their moral side to the trials of the Hebrew wanderers are not strangers to the life of our writer; to whom are they strangers, or who is a stranger to them? Who has not known the House of Bondage—the Egyptian oppression? Who has not gone down into Egypt; and who, inspired by a higher life, has not put the true meaning upon that word, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son?' We said that our writer in this volume was far from

\* *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage.* By James Baldwin Brown, B.A. Smith, Elder, & Co.

the arena of theological tournaments, but we do not imply by this that he has not laid himself open, in several sentences, to attack. There is the same horror of the Calvinistic creed about men's salvation, and we ourselves, did we not feel the purpose of the book, and its structure and style to be altogether too holy and beautiful and pure for such disputations, might ask our writer whether the single fact of Israel's selection for the purposes of such lessons as those now read to us does not warrant our belief in a principle of selection or election higher than that which we believe is unfolded in this book. Our readers will not, then, expect from us more than a concise presentation of the volume. Inwoven with the narrative are frequent daguerreotypic sketches of the scenes which meet the visions of the wanderers upon their way, and the physical aspects are admirably used for the purpose of interpreting and giving effect to the moral impressions of the spot. Here is a vivid picture of the camp upon its way, and it gives a very fair illustration of Mr. Brown's eloquent and graphic style:—

“Imagine that mighty host winding through the dreary paths of the desert, lonely there as a people among peoples, as their Lord became lonely as a man among men; cut off utterly from all national associations and sympathies; the strongest people in the world behind them, animated by the most deadly hatred, and powerful nations in front, armed to receive them, and to dispute with them every inch of the inheritance they were resolved to win; marching on along those solemn desert pathways, with the visible sign in the midst of them of the presence in person of the Lord God of the whole world. There, under the blazing rays of the burning noon, a soft cloud spread its cool shadow on the weary plain, and refreshed imagination at any rate—and what pure refreshment that is—with the picture of the shadowing love of the Lord God Almighty over the whole wearying pilgrimage and battle march of life! And then, as evening fell, and the glooms of night began to drop their awful shroud—for nightfall is awful in the lonely waste—over the weird forms and hues of those beetling cliffs, or the gaunt outlines of the desert palms, the cloud began to glow and lighten, till it cast a broad flood of living lustre, such as we see on earth only in dreams, on the whole scene of the desert encampment. It touched the spurs and peaks of the mountains, till they stood glowing like angel sentinels around the camp of God's redeemed, and filled the night watchers—and let us be sure that there were a multitude, and not the least earnest-hearted of the people—with some vision of what might be seen, if, as at Elisha's prayer, the veils were lifted, and all the heavenly armies appeared attending the path of God's host through battles and perils, through foaming seas and dreary deserts, to their glorious rest. But magnificent as was the sign, the thing signified transcended it. In vain had the Divine presence been shown to them in that miraculous cloud and glory, if there had been no inner sense



of the Divine presence in their hearts. It is in the communion between Moses and the Divine Leader of the host, that we are admitted into the true sanctuary of that people's strength. Just so far as their spirits went with Moses in this prayer, in this yearning for the inner presence and guidance of God, did they march joyously and triumphantly on their way; and when that failed, the visible cloud of splendour helped them no longer; they dropped like blighted fruit from the living tree, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. So we will enter with Moses within the cloud that sweeps round Sinai, and consider our sources of strength and guidance for the pilgrimage of life.'

But the true charm of the book will be found, not in the recapitulation of the Hebrew narrative, or in the ready identification of the pictorial majesties, the wildernesses, rocks, pastoral rests, and glorious skies of Palestine; but in the frequent reading of the phases in the history of the human soul. Mr. Brown speaks immediately to the inner knowledge of his hearers or readers; his words unwind the memories of past hours and days, and in his frequent short, invigorating, healthy proverbs and pictures, he speaks the language and records the warning of life. We purpose presenting our readers with a page of these broken beauties:—

#### WHAT CHRIST DOES FOR US.

*'It is the work of the child of God in this life to recover the possession of his faculty through the vital attraction of his Saviour, and yield it to his service; when the recovery is complete, when the flood of life flows freely through every pulse and channel, earth becomes too dark a prison-house, it is time to arise and to go home.'*

#### THE TRUE KING.

'God, my Redeemer! There is but one redemption possible for man—restoration to the rule of his rightful King. The redeemed man is the governed man; the man who has re-found the King who can evoke his loyal passions, and control and direct his manifold powers. This rule, the rule of his true King, has been lost to him through sin. This supreme, complete control of his being heaven will restore. The inward strife is the real agony of the spirit. Let a man be at peace within, at one with himself and God, and worlds have no power to harm or torment him.'

#### REST.

*'But for man to rest, is to live. To rest in God, is to enter into life.'*

#### HEAVEN.

*'Heaven is a state, and not a place, we are assured by our present illuminati. Most surely: places do not constitute spirits, but spirits places.'*

## A WORLD BEHIND THE VEIL.

'A world behind the veil is the instinctive belief of every human spirit: a world, with all the attributes of a world like this, in which the promises of this flawed and fractured creation shall be realized; wherein no hope shall be frustrated, no cord of association broken, which has been consecrated by holy communion here.'

## SUDDEN VISIONS.

'There are times when there breaks in, on most of us at least, an awful sense of the wealth of faculty with which God has endowed us, and the glorious beauty and richness of this world. It comes to us but in gleams; there are those to whom the vision is ever present. "I never saw that in nature," said a critic to Turner. "I dare say not," was the answer; "but don't you wish you could, though?" His open eye saw what you and I can but dimly trace in nature; but you and I shall see it, ay, and things infinitely more grand and fair, if the spirit, quickened by Christ, and purged by discipline, bears up its faculty to the heavenly world.'

## A SEPULCHRE.

'There is a whited sepulchre of a soul! Once he was a poor boy; he had but a crust in the wide world, and he shared it with a poorer comrade, without a regret, without a care. Once he loved, too, and was beloved. His heart was large, warm, genial. He valued life for its friendships and relationships; its claims gladdened him, its duties inspired. But that has long, long been buried. A cold sneer, whenever he thinks of it, is its epitaph. One day, when he is dead, and they bear him pompously to his splendid tomb, there will be lawyers and heirs at his strong box, to rifle the secrets which he has so jealously and successfully hid. Pile on pile of papers and securities is arranged there in admirable order. But there is an inner cabinet, a secret drawer—surely the sum of the whole is treasured there, the coveted balance-sheet of his affairs. No key is found, no spring can be discovered; they burst it open at length, and find there—a faded letter, a withered flower, and a lock of a woman's hair! He buried them there years ago, when he buried his higher nature, of which they are the memorial, in—himself.'

## THE WORLD IN THE SHADE.

'There is a sad tone about the world's countenance. On the whole, it is a careworn and death-stricken world; and it looks like it. The shadows lie more thickly than the sunbeams; the winter reigns more mightily than the spring. The deepest undertone of poetry and art is a lamentation; earth is dressed to be the theatre of a tragedy of life. *The optimists are ever mastered, in the end, by the severities of reality; and Epicurus, in the long-run, sets the fashion of suicide.* It is tragic, is life; all peoples have felt it; and earth is fashioned and draped to be the theatre of man. I do not indulge

here in platitudes about the falling leaves of autumn, and the deepening shadows of night, because I believe that any particular phenomenon of nature may be turned by man to his mood if he will. But I think that I have on my side man's firmest convictions and earth's clearest expressions when I say, that in the half-lights of man's life here the shadow predominates, and that the minor rules the music of the world.'

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

*'But Isaiah's prophecies—Isaiah's glowing picture of what a State must be to fulfil the idea of God, and develop instead of dwarfing its citizens—is a book which you should keep in your counting-house in the heart of the bustling city, and is at this day as true and fruitful for Cheapside and Clapham, as it was for the traffic and the homes of Jerusalem.'*

In fact, these are but faint hints of the beauties which the discerning eye will find scattered along these pages. They bear abundant evidence of their own reality, and of the reality of its excellent author. There are many readers who will doubtless find much more in the volume to assault than to commend. We do not envy them their ways: they are not our ways. We took up 'The Exodus of the Soul,' and we surrendered ourselves to the author. We felt that he was bearing us along upon a quiet and hallowed stream of holy writing; and, when we closed the volume, it was with the feeling that 'the Lord is the Shepherd of His people, in all ages, and that there is comfort alike in his rod and his staff.' At the same time, will Mr. Brown forgive us for saying that he certainly would have greatly added to the completeness and beauty of his book had he noticed those supernatural arrangements which accompanied the favoured people in their travels—the tabernacle and its furniture; the sacrifices, and their signification; the pillars of cloud and of fire; the foes, too, the human foes; the battle-plain. We wonder much that so human a book has not more human lineaments. Some of those slighter sketches which abound in the Book of Numbers ought to have found their way to these pages for exposition and for exhibition. But the volume has a very distinct place in our literature. We might suppose that such preaching would be eminently popular, yet we can also understand why it may not be. Yet how many a famous preacher might read this volume, and feel shame to think of his own famousness; and learn, from another instance, that famousness may spring from a lack of noble qualities as well as from the possession of them, even as another man may be unknown because he sounds the deeps of the human heart too faithfully or closely; or speaks, in tones too sorrowfully true, of the realities of life, in language too tenderly chorded and refined.



## V.

## UNDERHILL'S WEST INDIES.—A VISIT TO A RUINED COLONY.\*

OUR first memory of Jamaica is of a funeral procession. We were five years old when, one night, after having enjoyed some hours of sleep, we were awakened, carefully wrapped in our mother's shawl, and taken to the house-door, to witness such a scene as in Jamaica will never be witnessed again. The midnight clocks struck twelve, and as they struck, suddenly the hills were all alive, and radiant with the light of some hundreds of torches. There, through the mazes of that mountain path, wound the procession, the minister at its head, then the coffin, then the long succession of black faces, lit up by the torch which each carried; and the hills were vocal as the people sung,

‘Hallelujah to the Lamb,  
Who hath brought us our pardon,  
We'll praise him again  
As we pass over Jordan.’

For those midnight clocks tolled the death-knell of Slavery in Jamaica: manacles, chains, and whips were in that coffin; groans were turned into songs, for it was the 1st of August, 1838! This is our first vivid remembrance of Jamaica. We have heard how the minister, at six o'clock in the morning, baptized about 200 people, to whom that 1st of August brought

‘Freedom to worship God,’

and whose first act was one of grateful consecration to His service. We have heard how, later in the day, the pastor united thirty couples in marriage, for hand might be linked restingly in hand *now*, and *no man* could put the God-united asunder any more; and the husbands laughed in the freedom of this new delight, whilst the wives, as the consecrating marriage-ring was put on their fingers, each courtesied and said, ‘Tank ye, minister.’ The *Athenæum*, in noticing Mr. Underhill's book, jeers at the imaginary cruelties of slavery, and the doubtful atrocities practised upon negroes. We were too young to have seen anything of these ourselves; but we well remember seeing a poor old woman, one Susan Mackenzie, who, for attending her class-meetings, had been flogged so that her back, when it had healed, was as white as our mother's hand. We remember

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\* *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition.* By Edward Bean Underhill. Jackson, Walford & Hodder.

wondering at the *black* face and the *white* back, and our child's heart thrilled with horror, as we were told how her sympathizing husband had carried her in his arms for many miles to the nearest town (her poor back bleeding all the way), to see if some redress could not be obtained from the magistrate there. Joseph Sturge saw this poor creature when he visited Jamaica, and thought so much of this joke (!), as the jeering *Athenæum* would call it, that he settled some small annuity upon the woman.

It is not possible to exercise too vivid an imagination when we call to mind the scenery of Jamaica. A page or two of the coldest description calls vividly to mind the pleasant verses of Andrew Marvell,—

‘Where the remote Bermudas ride.’

Some of Mr. Underhill's sketches of scenery are very happily introduced. With the volume before us, we shall refer to the topic again. It is scarcely possible to speak of any of the journeys in Jamaica without awaking impressions of surpassing beauty. Night amidst those solemn mountain solitudes, lit up by innumerable fire-flies, flitting about, leaping from bough to bough, and illuminating the dark recesses of the woods. Many of the words of Mr. Underhill compel us to finish even from memory the lines we have referred to,—

‘He hangs in shades the orange bright,  
Like golden lamps in a green night;  
And does in the pomegranate close  
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows:  
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,  
And throws the melons at our feet.’

We shall allow Mr. Underhill to describe a scene well known to us,—

#### THE NATURAL BRIDGE OF JAMAICA.

‘Before leaving Mount Hermon, we visited a rare natural curiosity in its vicinity. The morning was very foggy, the mist lying in dense masses in the deep valleys. The effect of the sun tipping with its rays the crowns of the cocoanut-trees, which in long array stood above the mist, was very curious. As it cleared away, we rode out a mile or two on the main road to Spanish Town, which here crosses the island from Port Maria. Stopping at a cottage we dismounted, and began to descend the precipitous side of a deep ravine. Through the kind forethought of our host, the bush had been cut down in anticipation of our coming, and thus the rude path, though encumbered with the roots of trees, was left unobstructed by the thick vegetation which walled us in. Having reached the bottom, our path now lay up the bed of what is, in the rains, or after a storm, a torrent. Stepping over the

smaller stones and rounding the boulders, and sometimes climbing the faces of the rocks, we went on, admiring the profusion of ferns, the innumerable climbing plants, and the overarching boughs, through which fitfully flickered the beams of the sun, now free from its veil of mist. A slow scramble of about twenty minutes brought us to the object of our search—a magnificent natural bridge of living rock, spanning the chasm at the height of seventy or eighty feet. Slowly we passed under the massive arch, wondering at its magnitude, admiring the play of sunlight on its rugged surfaces as the rays pierced the branches of the trees, which, overshadowing the gorge with their thick foliage, gave a mysterious character to the gloom which settled on every spot where the sun's beams could not reach. Innumerable swallows nests covered the higher surfaces of the cliffs, and in more than one place honey trickled from the rock, where wild bees had built their cells. Passing through the arch, we found ourselves in a large circular space, like a gigantic cauldron, formed by precipices carved into a circular form by the whirl of waters from the cascade, which now gently trickled down on the upper side; but which, in the rainy season, becomes a cataract, whose roar may be heard at a considerable distance. In this pool we found two or three caves, which with the pool itself are inaccessible when the waters from the mountains come down, the height to which they rise being distinctly marked on the surface of the rocks. Here we lingered for a long time, enjoying the coolness of the air, watching the play of light and colour, picking up most exquisitely delicate land shells, and striving to fix for ever in our memories a picture of the grand and noble sight. Warned by Mr. Hume that health might suffer by a prolonged stay amidst the mass of vegetation, some of it decaying, around us, we reluctantly left and retraced our steps.

'The tradition runs that this fine natural curiosity was unknown until, some sixty years ago, a straying cow was found to have crossed the hitherto impassible ravine. On tracing her path, the bridge was discovered, concealed by the dense bush through which she had forced her way. We afterwards crossed it, but could only catch an imperfect glimpse through the foliage of the deep hollow from which we had just emerged.'

Nor can we resist the pleasure of quoting the description of

#### MOUTH RIVER CAVE.

'In the hill behind the neat little chapel, which stands alone by the road-side, is *Mouth River Cave*, one of the grandest natural curiosities of the island. It is reached by a steep path almost obliterated by the bush. We first examined a sort of vestibule to the cavern, in which Divine worship has occasionally been held before the chapel was built. It will hold a congregation of two hundred persons. Turning a little to the left, we entered the main opening. Here our attendants lit their torches of pine wood, and



preceded us into the interior, throwing a bright though flickering light along the roof and walls. The alley was a broad one, opening into a series of magnificent halls. In many places, pillars of stalagmite had been built up by the unintermitting roof-drip. In others, stalactites in smooth cones, or carved pendants, of the most elegant proportions, rivalling the icicles of an arctic clime, hung from the vault of the lofty roof. Here was a screen of leaves or fretwork, sparkling and transparent in the gleam of the torches; there a clustered pillar of crystallized limestone, which might well have adorned a Gothic minster. The cavern was a cathedral of nature, with nave, aisles, and chapels of glorious beauty, enriched with bosses, and finials, groined arches, and columns of noble forms, the work of an artist infinitely more skilful than a Phidias or a Praxiteles. Once or twice I was startled by a strange similitude to the front of some gorgeously carved idol temple, such as I have seen in India, so perfect were the niches, so grotesque the forms which filled them. More than once I fancied that some idol was seated on its pedestal, arms and head perhaps gone, or partially hidden, but solemnly and silently seeming to wait for the homage it once received. Scrambling over the irregular floor, and along narrow corridors, we wandered from hall to hall, scarcely able to restrain the ecstacy of pleasure which the unusual and superb magnificence of the scene excited. The cavern took more than an hour to examine, for it occupies the whole of the interior of the hill which enfolds it.

These are but slight extracts from many similar pleasant descriptions. We cannot think, therefore, with our fastidious reviewer of the *Athenæum*, that Mr. Underhill is 'quite' unsuccessful in this respect, and that 'he does not appear to have cultivated landscape painting in words.' But indeed we would recommend to the worn-out and sated European traveller to winter it in Jamaica. There he will behold sights of surpassing loveliness, and hear notes and tones among the hills and forests of stirring and transcendent melody. Hedges of orange-trees marking the inclosures of the plantations; among the lonely defiles of the mountains the little sequestered village, with its two or three houses, and its larger tabernacle, reared for the convenience of neighbouring villages, built of bamboos and thatched with palm-leaves. How richly to the eye rises the foliage over the whole island of the dark-green pimento. Not only is the tree lovely to the eye, but in the neighbourhood the fragrance perfumes the whole air. We too have felt the enjoyment of all these enchantments, among the arbours of foliage and the picturesque loveliness of Roaring River, the profuse and brilliant sunlight, and the tender, floating, beauty glimpses of the sun, breaking through the rock or boughs at intervals, or the

sound of the sea tolling its deep bell beneath our feet as we went from ledge to ledge of rock. There are other scenes farther inland. We do not wonder that Mr. Underhill's impressions of Sligoville and Orange Grove are among the most beautiful of which he has retained the memory. What ferns and orchids! what luscious oranges, and citrons, and shaddocks! How pleasant the trip down the Rio Cobre through the thick foliage of acacia woods, matted together by lilies and pendant flowers! The traveller rides along, and muses as he rides upon the stories of the poverty of Jamaica. Poor Jamaica! Why, there is not a vision rises to the eye but it bears testimony to immeasurable and unbounded wealth. Well says Mr. Sewell:—

‘I have no patience to listen to their complaints, when I look at the unbounded wealth and wonderful resources of the country. They cry out at the high price of labour, and pretend they cannot grow corn, when corn is grown at five times the cost in the United States, and exported to Jamaica at a handsome profit. They import beef, and tongues, and butter, though this very parish of Manchester offers advantages for raising stock that no portion of America possesses. They import mackerel, and salmon, and herrings, and codfish, though Jamaica waters abound in the most splendid kind of fish. They import woods, though Jamaica forests are unrivalled for the variety and beauty and usefulness of their timber. They import tobacco, though their soil in many districts is most excellent for its growth. The negroes, who have never been taught these things, are learning them slowly, by experience, and a gradual decline in certain articles of import demonstrates that they now raise on their own properties a very large proportion of their own provisions.’

It is a grand country, and not so bad as it seems. The traveller climbs a hill, he overlooks vast meadow-lands, filled with stock, gleaming like little specks of light amidst the dark wilderness of wood and huge cotton-trees, and hundreds of oxen. Such scenes may be beheld on the May-Day Mountains. And on the journey Mr. Sewell found the character of the negro for hospitality to contrast admirably with the character of the Southern States planter. He says he never asked for cocoa-nuts or oranges by the wayside and was refused, the owner generally refusing payment, and never accepting it without saying that he did not need it for a service so trivial. Yes, it is pleasant to spend some time in Jamaica. Some of Mr. Sewell's pictures please us much. Here is a picture of the village of Linstead:—

‘Linstead is a pleasant little village—lively enough on Saturday mornings, when its only street, which is also its only market-place, is thronged with peasants who have come in to buy or to sell. Commend me to a West Indian market as a fit illustration of

Babel after the confusion of tongues. These people are quite as anxious to sell as the progeny of Noe were to build. The sum of their ambition is to get rid of the little lots of yams and oranges that they have brought many a weary mile. They get a shilling or two for their produce, and return as happy as though they were millionaires. I never lived among a more cheerful or a more civil people. Each man, woman, or child that you meet along the road—I speak exclusively of the peasantry—gives a hearty “Good mornin’, massa,” and a respectful salutation. Their spirits are buoyant, and they are ever ready for a joke or a laugh, if you are disposed to bandy words with them. The crowd collected in the Linstead market-place may be heard a mile off, but there is no quarrelling of any kind. It is their fashion to make a noise and talk incessantly, as why should they not? Their exuberance of spirit needs an outlet, and their only amusements are to laugh and gossip.’

No doubt Jamaica looks as if it were a lost colony. You stand at Kingston :

‘The old, old sea, as one in tears,  
Comes wandering with her foamy lips,  
And knocking at its vacant piers,  
Calls for her long-lost multitude of ships.’

‘Kingston,’ exclaims Mr. Sewell, in language which, we fancy, will not be relished by the residents there, ‘looks what it is, a place where money has been made, but can be made no more. It is used up and cast aside as useless. Nothing is replaced that time destroys. If a brick tumbles from a house to the street, it remains there; if a spout is loosened by the wind, it hangs by a thread till it falls; if furniture is accidentally broken, the idea of having it mended is not entertained. The marks of a helpless poverty are upon the faces of the people whom you meet, in their dress, in their very gait.

‘Have I described a God-forsaken place, in which no one seems to take an interest, without life and without energy, old and dilapidated, sickly and filthy, cast away from the anchorage of sound morality, of reason, and of common sense? Then, verily, have I described Kingston in 1860. Yet this wretched hulk is the capital of an island the most fertile in the world; it is blessed with a climate most glorious; it lies rotting in the shadow of mountains that can be cultivated from summit to base, with every product of temperate and tropical regions; it is mistress of a harbour where a thousand line-of-battle ships can safely ride at anchor.’

And yet what does the traveller behold? Why, a country everywhere equal to production—from the vast highlands, where they can cultivate potatoes, and the cool hills, where may be enjoyed the luxury of the frosty night, to the plains below, where, beneath the torrid heats, they raise the more desirable staple of the sugar-cane.

The topic of Jamaica has become a threadbare one—people



are becoming weary of it. There is no doubt that the beautiful island has undergone a change. It is no longer the scene of prosperity. Kingston, according to the account of Mr. Sewell, is in ruins. Some portions of the island, indeed, seem to be prosperous; but there is a change. Some persons are only too glad to find the cause in emancipation; some, which is nearly the same thing, in the perversity of the negro race. It is not a quite easy problem to solve, without some measure of personal observation; but it is a most important problem to solve. Jamaica is the Ireland of the West Indies; like Ireland, a very troublesome colony to manage; like Ireland, cursed by absenteeism and the poverty of its landlords; like Ireland, too, cursed by the consequences of bad government; like Ireland, amazingly rich in all material resources; an island which would well repay a slight measure of attention. The island is no doubt in ruins, but we cannot afford to lose it. Capital well expended there would meet with a handsome and speedy return. It is, we think, satisfactorily proved that the old planterocracy, since the emancipation, desired to compel the services of the negro at a price less than remunerative. The negro or the creole has refused to work where he could not calculate upon commensurate wages, or where, as was very likely, he could calculate upon no wages at all. But the negro has not been inattentive to his own interests. He has raised himself in the social scale; he has his own little house in the woods, apparently full of furniture, and good furniture; he has accumulated some little property together; he has, in fact, shown that he can labour, if labour only presents to him an adequate motive.

A careless, wild, rollicking, but yet most gentlemanly and hospitable race, according to tradition, was the old planterocracy. We have *heard* something of the old Jamaica hospitality, and have experienced not a little of it. One instance we remember which, with its attendant circumstances, impressed us not a little. The apprenticeship system still reigned in Jamaica, and the 1st of August had not yet come, when a Mr. B., attorney of an estate in Hanover, refused to grant to his slaves some right which the law allowed them to claim. The slaves took their trouble to the minister, *then* the gratefully acknowledged friend of the negro. The minister, whom we know very well, wrote to Sir Lionel Smith, then governor of the island, representing the case. Mr. B. was fined and reprimanded. Then he vowed vengeance against the man who had brought this disgrace upon him; forbade his overseer and slaves attending his chapel on pain of dismissal or punishment. Our friend was informed of the fierce wrath his conduct had

excited in the mind of the incensed planter, and warned to keep out of gun-shot reach. A few weeks passed on, when one evening our friend with his wife and young baby were travelling to a distant preaching-station, and being somewhat newly-arrived in the island, they lost their way and found themselves benighted near Mr. B.'s estate. What was to be done? To proceed on such a night, on such a road, was impossible. Our friend, who had lost none of his English pluck, leaped from his chaise, and knocking at the house of the overseer, claimed his hospitality. 'Impossible!' was the reply. Mr. B. is at the great house; he would be sure to hear of it, and I should be dismissed to-morrow.' 'Well, then,' said our friend to a negro standing by, 'take my card up to Mr. B., tell him I am here, benighted in a strange land, with my wife and infant, and I claim his hospitality for the night.' The message was taken. Soon lights were seen gleaming from the windows. A gentleman with a lighted torch in his hand was standing on the steps, and Mr. B.'s hand was extended to welcome his guests. The wife was taken to a separate apartment, whilst her husband joined our planter and his friends in the drawing-room. Soon refreshing tea was served, and afterwards a tempting supper of roast pigeons and yams; and when our friend said, 'We thought it was not customary to have supper in Jamaica,' Mr. B. replied, 'Neither is it, but I thought you had been so short a time in Jamaica that you might still retain your English habits.' After a most agreeable evening, our friend joined his wife, and heard from her how hospitably she had been treated; how the carpenter's wife, who had a baby of her own, had been sent to give the baby *his* supper; how she had feared what all this kindness might mean from a man who had supposed himself injured by them. In the morning, at five o'clock, the carpenter's wife came again to take the baby. Our friends arose to pursue their journey. Mr. B. was up to meet them. A substantial hot breakfast was ready awaiting them, after which they pursued their journey, parting from their kind host with feelings of mutual esteem, which, we believe, exists to this day. Honour to whom honour is due. We do not always speak very respectfully of the old planter race; but this anecdote, we believe, illustrates something of the nobler side of their character. Bad government has been the curse of the island. Constant efforts have been made to reclaim back again the lost powers of the planterocracy. The government of Jamaica appears to have been not only bad, but abominable. What, for instance, could be worse than the law to regulate marriage? By this precious Act the fees of the clergy were commuted for an annual payment

from the colonial treasury; but all dissenters were to be compelled to charge fees to be paid into the island chest to meet the amount of commutation. For every omission to charge this fee, a Nonconformist minister was liable to twelve months' imprisonment. This Act was intended to destroy the influence of the missionaries, and to induce the people to place themselves beneath episcopal instruction. Nor was this all. All past marriages performed by the dissenters were to be recorded within three months to become valid, for which a fee of four shillings and two pence was to be paid; and as thousands of marriages had been performed by dissenting ministers, it was equivalent to a fine of hundreds of pounds. What do our readers think of the expenditure in one year—1841—of £65,919 18s. upon the Church of England from Inland Revenues? And what will they think of the British Government adding the same year to this sum a sum of £8,100 more? The taxes have been heavily levied on articles consumed by the poor; 12½ per cent. payable on all imports; and salt provisions, meat, fish, and farinacious articles, taxed as high as 30 and 40 per cent. Wheeled vehicles formerly taxed 4s. 2d. each cart, are now taxed 18s. Thus, a parish which formerly contained five hundred carts, now contains less than two hundred; and thus the development of industry is retarded; in every way in which the genius of industry could be repressed it has been repressed. No wonder the island has been ruined. The taxes of Jamaica seem to have been so levied as to be the ruin of Jamaica. The tax of 10s. imposed for the registration of the vote. The Ejectment Act, empowering the planter to turn out the enfranchised peasantry at a week's notice from the homes where they had been bred and born—to root up their provision-grounds, and to cut down their fruit-trees; then taxes, taxes, taxes everywhere to embarrass him in his freedom, and to make it hard for him to settle. The duty was raised on all provisions. In slavery times, the duty on corn-food was three pence a barrel: for the free man it was raised to three shillings! On other provisions the duty was raised two or three hundred per cent. The negro tried to build a house when driven from the estate: the duties on shingles for the roof were immediately raised; his house heavily assessed by a tax, he abandoned his dwelling for shanties of mud and boughs. This has in many parts of the island stopped improvement. The tax is, we believe, repealed; but it is not so easy to restore confidence, and, meantime, the estates have been left. Thus the 'Happy Valley' seems to be deserted for this reason alone. Those who talk of the negro's laziness and intractability would do well to remember these severe measures taken to repress the



beneficence of the Emancipation Act. In fact, the decline of Jamaica commenced before the Emancipation Act was passed. It was not emancipation that dragged her down ; it was the wild, reckless planter life. We know something of that life in our own country. It was the old Cavalier life ; the old Tory life ; it was a life in which, even sixty years since, the crimp and the shark were doing their work with those who in England passed for nominal residents in Jamaica. These spent half the year in Europe. England was their home, and Jamaica merely a place out of which the most was to be made. These persons were 'bankrupt before emancipation, and this only tore down the veil which concealed their poverty.' They have never opened their eyes apparently from the delusion of the belief that they were a race of men surely to be protected. They were exactly like a class we know of, called farmers, or landlords, before the repeal of the Corn-laws ; and they have waited in the modest expectation that the Government of England would surely relieve them. They have waited in vain. Some have had the sense and foresight to put their shoulders to the wheel, and they have not wrought in vain. Mr. B——, the hospitable landlord whose kindness we experienced, is one of these ; he is one of the most prosperous landlords in Jamaica. Others have suffered, and most deservedly.

We must steadily insist upon retaining our impression that the negro has been misunderstood by both parties ; by the extreme philanthropist party, who have made him the type of all manhood, forgetting his ignorance, his mere wild animal character, his need of education, and discipline, and training. No doubt much has been said most ridiculous in itself, and dangerous in its results ; and, on the contrary, there have been those who, in their steady refusal to recognise the improvability of the negro race, have foreordained that they shall not be improved ; but what is the fact ? The negroes, it is said, will not work. Well, are they thriftless vagabonds then, like multitudes who will not work in England ? Far from it ; the testimony of both Mr. Underhill and Mr. Sewell go to show that the operation of the Emancipation Act has been to create and erect them into a large middle class. As in the *old régime* there were but two classes, namely, the planter and the slave ; now, the negro, upon his patch of land, cultivating his yams, his oranges, or his coffee, perhaps even his sugar plantation, has become a quite important character. There must be much in this calculated to keep the old ill-blood boiling in the planter's bosom. In fact, the negro has been improving, the planter has been deteriorating. There is, of course, great danger in this state of things. The

truth is, Quashee wants a guide, a commander, and leader. He wants the strong hand of one who can rule to be laid upon him. But that he possesses power to become a moral force in the colony for great good, is, we think, abundantly shown in what he has already, in circumstances most disadvantageous, done for himself. Jamaica is ruined, say the planters. Well, there is a much larger amount of social happiness than could be found beneath the old rule. What is the fact? Why, that since the Emancipation there have come into existence 65,000 houses, built and furnished at a cost of, say £16 each. They have purchased 354,575 acres of land, at a rate of 30s. an acre, although this is a sum far below what was paid at the time when the settlements were first formed; they have provided themselves with clothes, say at a rate of £4 for each family. They have stocked their freeholds with pigs, goats, horses and carts, say at the rate of £3 each family. They have deposits in the Savings' Banks amounting to £49,399. The total, in fact, of all the accumulations reaches to two millions sterling. Mr. Underhill follows the calculations of the Hanover Society of Arts, and gives the following items:—

	£	s.	d.
'65,000 houses, with furniture, at £16 each	1,040,000	0	0
354,575 acres of land, at 30s. an acre ...	531,862	10	0
Clothes for 65,000 families, at £4 each ...	260,000	0	0
Stock on freeholds, at £3 each family ...	195,000	0	0
5,000 Sugar Mills, at £10 each ... ..	50,000	0	0
Funds in Savings' Banks ... ..	49,399	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£2,126,261	10	0

We do not desire to exaggerate the estimate of the negro character; but, amidst the universal reprobation, perhaps it will be thought that these figures show a state of things not guiding to helpless and hopeless despair; and this has all been done amidst circumstances most calculated to crush and repress the spirits of any but so buoyant and cheerful a creature as the negro is.

Mr. Underhill says:—

'But the same striking result may be arrived at in a still more satisfactory manner.

'Although each family possesses over five acres of land, it cultivates only a little more than one acre. To our frequent inquiries, we were told that the value of the produce of the provision grounds would average from £12 to £25 an acre. It may, I think, be taken at £20, which is one-third less than the estimate of the Society of Arts. I shall omit altogether the value of the live stock reared and con-

sumed. To the above must be added the labour value of all the exports, consisting of sugar, pimento, ginger, and other products, which, although they are not the property of the labourer, are the fruit of his toil. It appears that the value of the labour expended upon the productions of the soil by the people of Jamaica is not less than £2,162,773. This amount represents the simple value of the labour, the value of the produce is far greater. The export value of four articles, coffee, pimento, rum, and sugar, set down as having only a labour value of £334,613 14s. Od., was, in the year 1857, £1,217,740.

‘Tested by figures, it must, I think, be conceded that the negroes of Jamaica have made no inconsiderable progress in the acquisition of material wealth; and that the results of their daily toil are sufficient to refute the oft-repeated assertions, that they “eat their yam without work,” and that “on the whole, they laugh, and sing, and sleep through life.” Only ignorance, or inveterate prejudice, can be blind to the truth as it really is. The creole labourers of Jamaica have many faults, and some grave ones; but idleness is certainly not a marked characteristic of the race.’

We have already said that the traveller, as he passes through the island, beholds, in every hollow or gorge, cottages nestling, with their patches of cultivation; and, in all directions, settlements visible. Nay, it has been found that those who can pay the negro can command his services. There are negroes glad to work in the mines; negro firemen, boilermen, coopers, and masons. We do not desire to convey to our readers any other than the true human impression; but the voice goes against Jamaica, against the negro, against emancipation, and we must beg our readers to look carefully through the pages of Mr. Underhill, and those, too, of Mr. Sewell, before they fall into the hopeless state of despair to which the abominable and abandoned government of Jamaica, and the utter penury, the needy, threadbare poverty of the planter has conducted the thoughts of the people of this country. At the same time, we should quite differ from the excellent author of this volume in his impressions with reference to the religious action upon the island. It is known that the Baptist Missionary Society has now no connection with Jamaica, except by sympathy and the broad principles of Christian truth and fellowship. We cannot think this is wise action. We do not believe that, as yet, the negro is fitted to be his own leader. We know there are those in the island, creoles, who would adorn any company, and be a light to any society. Such men as Mr. Richard Hill, whose name, as a naturalist and a scholar, is known in this country. But these are very rare exceptions. The taste is degraded in general: the ideas are low. Obeahism is not yet quite exterminated, and there is a need for



a loftier morality than any we fear likely at present to be exemplified in the African race, or the average creole character. We perceive a strong tendency to regard the Calabar institution as the sheet anchor of hope for the evangelisation of Jamaica. Our readers will not suppose that we wish to indulge in any ungraceful spite against the honoured Calabar College; but we are not lords over our memories, and we have some very funny ones which we cannot repress. We were in Falmouth Chapel once when a full-fledged native minister, with all the dignities of his college education and ordination fresh upon him, delivered himself, from the pulpit, that had been William Knibb's, of a sermon, from the text, 'Godliness is profitable in all things.' After introducing all the advantages to be derived from Godliness—amongst others, that '*ministers' wives were generally clean and neat, especially on Sundays*'—he proceeded to enlarge upon the evils consequent on an ungodly life; how it promoted disease, and led to the committal of many crimes, amongst others, '*suicide and murder, which have a great tendency to shorten life!*' He wound up his discourse with—'Lastly, by way of peroration, from the urgency of the case.' We are afraid he is better known now as Mr. Peroration, than as Mr. —, we won't give his real name.

The humour of the negro character is altogether infinite to those who have the disposition to see, or the perception to use it. We believe, however, that of this humour the negro is himself very frequently unconscious.

'A story was told of a negro woman, with a child on her back, who entered a store. The child quietly took a handful of nails and hid them; on going out, she asked the child what he had taken, and on seeing the nails, said laughingly:—"What! him teal from Buckra, already?"'

We well remember, at a 1st of August prayer meeting, some years after *the great 1st of August*, hearing a black man in prayer, thank God for freedom to the negro; 'but,' he added, 'Thou knowest, O Lord, I purchased my own freedom and my wife's!' And this reminds us that we have heard, on other occasions, some very droll things in prayer. We once heard a highly respectable minister, in Kingston, prayed for, in the following fashion: 'Oh! Lord, bress we minister! Grant him may lift up his voice like a mighty strumpet! Bress him b'lubbed pardner in life, and all dem lilly increase! Bress him horse, and bress him chaise, dat when him done preach de gospel for we here, him may ride away in glory, O!' In communicating with the negro race, we must take what English we can get, and be

thankful. Our readers will perceive that it is not always perfect, either in syntax or orthography.

We recollect hearing a young and somewhat fastidious minister prayed for as follows:—‘Bress dy young sarbant; dou knowest he is young in years, but old in sin.’ We did not with our own veritable ears hear the following, but we were told by one who did hear it, of a minister and his wife, at the north side of the island, who were prayed for in this complimentary style:—‘Bress our dear minister and him b’lubbed paramour!’ The negroes love fine words, the meanings being quite a secondary consideration, and generally, however infelicitous their diction, are by no means remarkable for modesty. Our readers well know the calm, quiet manner of the beloved minister of Pembroke chapel, Liverpool, the Rev. C. M. Birrell. Of course, on his visit to Jamaica, in 1846-7, as a missionary deputation, he took all his quiet and stillness with him. One Sunday, after preaching a most delightful sermon at East Queen Street, Kingston, the pastor’s wife inquired of one of the congregation how he enjoyed it. ‘Oh, missus,’ he replied, ‘berry well, berry well; but I tink de buckra seem rader ’fraid o’ we!’

The following anecdote will not say much for the conjugal affection of the negro; but it must not be taken as a specimen of all. Any of our readers who know Jamaica, will recollect that sometimes the practice of a medical man in the mountains extends for a circuit of many miles. A doctor, an intimate friend of one whom we well knew, once relating his experiences to his friend, told him the following story:—A negro man, in very well-to-do circumstances, living at a distance of some miles, came to him one day, saying his wife was very ill; would massa doctor go and see her? ‘Certainly,’ said the doctor, ‘but you must first pay me five dollars which you owe me for a former visit to your wife.’ ‘Oh, massa, berry hard,’ said the man; ‘me can’t pay, massa.’ ‘Very well, then, I won’t come,’ said the doctor. ‘Ah, well, massa (shaking his head), me pose my wife must die den.’ The man went away; his wife died. Some time afterwards, the same man came again to the doctor:—‘Massa, my horse berry ill; will massa come see my horse?’ ‘I’m not a horse-doctor!’ very naturally and somewhat indignantly replied our medical friend. However, the man urged, and at last the doctor said, ‘Very well, I’ll come; but you must first pay me what you owe me.’ ‘Well,’ said the negro, ‘massa berry hard, but if I must, I must;’ and putting his hands into his pocket, he reluctantly drew forth the money. The doctor, greatly astonished, addressed him in no very gentle or complimentary terms, asking if he were not ashamed to let his *wife* die

rather than pay an old debt, which would have induced the doctor to try to save her life; whilst, as soon as his *horse* was taken ill, he could pay the money readily enough to secure attention to it. 'Berry true,' said the negro, shrugging his shoulders, 'but massa know if my *horse* die, I'm blidged to *buy* anoder, but if my *wife* die, I can get anoder for *noting*.'

We believe that Jamaica needs all that missionary zeal can spare for it; and we believe it will well repay that zeal; as with its larger staple of trade, so also with its religious energies. The largest chapel in Jamaica is East Queen Street. Since 1830, beneath the pastorate of the Rev. Samuel Oughton, some conception may be formed of it, when we say that that chapel is larger than Surrey Chapel; it holds two thousand persons. Our earliest recollections of that place are of its being compactly crowded every Sabbath morning and afternoon; the organ gallery, the window-seats thronged, while in connection with the church there were upwards of two thousand members. Times have changed in Jamaica, and especially in Kingston, although the old chapel is well attended, and sometimes even crowded still. The negro is a grateful creature, but he wants a guide, and like all of us in the degree in which we draw near to the animal, remarkably stupid if wrong. Mr. Oughton, who had laboured long in Jamaica, has received many hints of what the negro is, and we believe would give to us a far more noteworthy book than could be produced. We believe he has gone through quite remarkable phases of history; he has received testimonials of so high a kind, that they well illustrate the negroes' power to be grateful. In one stage of his history, his congregation sent to England for a silver candelabrum, worth £100, to present to him in testimony of their love; and we believe for the very reason that he has disputed the power of the negro *always* to be his own leader and teacher, he has suffered much from their persecution, and something from the desertion of friends. He alone, of all the missionaries, looks back to a period of *imprisonment* for his testimony against the planter and slavery; he wrought with his own hands in aiding the building of Falmouth Chapel, the tabernacle of the honoured William Knibb; and his voice was one of the first heard in opening it, and dedicating it to God. The same hands wrought in the enlarging of East Queen Street, and in painting it and repairing it. We mention these things, because while Sewell, and Trollope, and our excellent friend Mr. Underhill travel through the colony for two or three months, and give impressions which must be rapidly formed from few possibilities of observation, we see much in Mr. Sewell's work which brings to our mind many of the ripe remarks which have



fallen on our ears years ago in conversation on these very matters from the lips of our beloved friend the minister of East Queen Street, Kingston; we trust we shall have his impressions and experiences yet. But here we must close a paper too lengthy, and too brief. Jamaica demands attention, and we cheerfully commend the volume of Mr. Underhill to our readers' regard; it is very interesting reading. We have quoted sufficient to show how pleasantly the reader is transported from scene to scene; there is in it no 'falsehood of extremes,' it is an honest word for the common sense of the Jamaica Question, and the reader will, we believe, find from it that the negroes there are 'not so bad as they seem.'

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 VI.

## FOREIGN LITERATURE.

**T**HERE is much absurdity in the lamentations we often hear about the degeneracy of modern times. Some popular writers have fallen into this tone of complaint. If we are to believe many persons, this is a sadly prosaic Present, and the best we can hope for it is, that it may prove the cradle of some poetic Future. Ruskin laments in poetic strains over our want of faith, our growing effeminacy, and our depreciation of beauty. Carlyle is still more despairing. With him the present age is nothing but a 'rocking, plunging, weltering abyss,'—'all mists and fogs, with a few wild stars and will-o'-the-wisps overhead.'

With such opinions as these before us it requires some hardihood to stand up for the reputation of the nineteenth century. But it is petulant and childish to regret the good which is beyond our recall, instead of realizing the 'living present.' There is a common form of near-sightedness, which exaggerates the perfections of objects which are far off, from its inability to discern them clearly. Perhaps the times we live in are something like St. Peter's at Rome, where travellers are advised to take a step backwards, in order that from a more distant point of view they may form a just estimate of its architectural proportions. At any rate, there are some amongst us who can esteem this century of ours as nobler than those which have preceded it, discerning in it no want of beauty, but a peculiar grandeur for its earnest philanthropy and patient investigation of the laws of nature. Recent events have shown that man's

dislike to the arts of warfare (so bitterly lamented by some), has in no respect injured his courage; whilst Cawnpore and Lucknow have reminded us that the truest heroism and purest self-devotion may exist without thirst for bloodshed; for the 'Angel of Victory is yet the brother of the Angel of Martyrdom.' Nor do we think with Mr. Ruskin, that this is a faithless and unbelieving age. There may be much moral and social disease amongst us; there may be many who are in a state of doubt and uncertainty, who have discerned the emptiness of all created things, and are seeking for a footing amidst the wreck of their earthly hopes. There is a want of reverence in thought and language. We want more fear—not the fear which causes the slave to crouch before the lash—but the loving reverence of child-like awe. And yet, in spite of all this, we believe the presence and power of Christianity were seldom more vividly realized than at the present time. This is no period of indifference, but one in which the earnest and perplexing questions, 'How to serve God?' and 'How to do one's duty?' are constantly stirring the hearts and reasons of mankind. And in proportion to the sympathy which as Christians we must feel with the moral and intellectual condition of our fellow-men in this and in other countries, will be our interest in the daily literature which is the expression of their thoughts and feelings. It is the fashion to lament over the flimsy and ephemeral productions which constantly issue from our English and Continental presses, while the classics are proudly referred to as the 'immortality of speech,' in which the mighty dead 'yet speak' and exercise an important influence over the minds of the living. But our spinning is not the less valuable though the warp and woof be not all our own. Our modern progress in knowledge may be the result of accumulated experience rather than of developed intellect; for we have entered into the labours of our forefathers. But the songs of the poet are not yet all sung, and the discoveries of science are not all told; for this earth is ever living and ever fresh, and God's wonders are always unexplored. That is a narrow and one-sided spirit which thinks the world bounded by its own horizon, which has no suspicion of its own littleness, but veils an unthinking exclusiveness under the specious excuse of patriotism. Many of the best books in all ages have been suggested by the observations of contemporaries, and he must be dull and stunted in his sympathies who is indifferent to the moral and religious state of his fellow-men.

'I think,' remarks Ernest Renan, speaking of the present state of France, 'that there exists in millions of our contemporaries more penetration of spirit, of refinement, of true

philosophy and moral delicacy, than in all the past ages united.' And without going so far as the French essayist, we may remark, that in France, as in other countries, there is a progress of thought which (though it may be too much within the age, so that its influence is not always perceptible on society at large), yet should not be undervalued, since the power of the earnest and thinking minority cannot fail to affect the carelessness and flippancy of numbers, giving us reason to hope that those national diseases may in time be healed from within, which no legislation could ever cure from without. Schiller has a good saying, that modern men are 'units of great nations, but seldom great units in themselves.' Yet each of these individual units must exercise its influence upon a nation as a whole. A paralysed body regains its strength in proportion as every member of it resumes its original powers.

The reader who has followed us in this short preface will easily comprehend our purpose in this and in subsequent papers of giving a short account of the progress of French, German, and Italian thought, as exhibited in some of the recent productions of literature. In dealing with a few of the novelties and latest publications of the day, it will be necessary to refer to many of the works which still remain in circulation and affect the opinions of society at large. A period of rest has done something for France. The people, wearied and *blasé* of change, have turned their thoughts for a while from sedition and agitation to the progress of industry and intelligence. The exuberant activity which in times past was ready to vent itself in *émeutes* against royalty, is at present turned into other channels. A spirit of learning and research, a toleration of foreign institutions, and a growing interest in the classics of other nations, are amongst the most important characteristics of a few of the more enlightened of French eclectics; whilst we trust that the truth is gradually being recognised by others, that a didactic faith crushes those men who accept it merely as an official yoke, emanating from an exterior authority. In like manner, the progress of reflection and enlightenment in Germany are sufficient to furnish us with happy auguries for the intellectual future of a country where earnestness and moderation have brought about an abatement in that mania for bold speculation and injurious perversions of the truth, which has so long discredited its mental activity. The barren metaphysician of past times, who set himself to construct a natural religion by the help of his internal consciousness, is happily becoming an extinct creature in Germany; and often, when the reflection of such theories has begun to excite alarm (which is not unfounded)



in England, almost all recollection of their existence has fortunately died out in their native land.

In our short quarterly accounts of some of the most noteworthy publications which have appeared in French, German, and Italian literature, we propose to devote most attention to those books which indicate the progress of thought in theology, philosophy, history, biography, and social science, giving but a slight notice to those political and scientific disquisitions, which can scarcely be interesting to the majority of our readers.

The publication of M. St. Beuve's course of lectures on Chateaubriand\* may throw some light on the literary transition which has enabled many of the writers of the age to emancipate themselves from the worn-out formulas of art, and to break the bonds of ancient French classicality. This is a reform of no slight consequence, for still there is that which is poetry, and which has no further claim to that title than in its metre and its rhythm. Many men are called poets whose imagination is never active except when they dream, and whose pen is never facile, except when it utters prosaic truths. From a combination of these two elements, namely, formalism of verbal sounds, and formalism of sense and feeling, arises that school of art, whose principles are symbolised by the expression, *Conventional Poetry*. In theory, these conventionalisms are felt to be tyrannies; and in practice they destroy that inheritance of freedom which is the birthright of every spiritual art. For when language voluntarily puts itself under the restraints of metrical or rhythmic modulation, such language should submit to a law, and not to a despotism. That law, when reverentially and cheerfully obeyed, stands midway between a tyranny and an anarchy, like the supreme moral law herself, of whom Plutarch says that she is the 'queen of gods and of men.' There cannot be a more signal touchstone of the virtue and goodness of any style or era of poetry, than the fact that such poetry gladly and liberally finds embodiment in every conceivable form of utterance, and restricts itself to no unauthorised measure or rule, while a depraved school of art betrays itself by awkward endeavours to become accommodated, under the most dissimilar circumstances, to the same model and standard of visible expression.

The essential differences between the wild and fantastic style of the new school of French poetry and the old rules of orthodox art in France, are too manifest to escape the observation of the most superficial reader. Nor can it be a matter of wonder to us,

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\* 'Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire sous l'Empire.' Par C. A. St. Beuve, de l'Académie Française.

that in their vehement protest against mathematics and calculating reason, the poems of such men as Beranger, St. Beuve, Alfred de Musset, Alfred de Vigny, and André Chenier, should occasionally be marred by such defects as are usually to be found in all writings which are strongly characteristic of a transitional period. The value of the brilliant gallery of portraits which M. St. Beuve has, with great patience and skill, collected for us in the present course of lectures, is somewhat impaired by the unfairness of his strictures. M. Armand de Pont-Martin \* has since criticised somewhat severely the intemperance with which M. St. Beuve has not hesitated to depreciate an idol which he formerly exalted at the expense of others. It is probable that the enthusiasm for Chateaubriand will continue to abate as the revolution advances which poetry is experiencing. Chateaubriand was essentially a representative man of the time in which he lived. In his fine prose poems, the phrases have not ceased to march with the measured tread of Montaigne and Bossuet, and yet the reader may perceive in them a prophecy of that ideal dreaminess and wild extravagance which, in the writings of Hugo and Musset, have succeeded the pedantry of past times. During the excitement of the revolution, poetry, as a rhythmic art, disappeared in France. Songs would have been a mockery when men needed clear speech. Amid the Utopian theories of Condorcet, the turgid eloquence of Robespierre, and the wild ravings of Rousseau, there was no temptation to lyricise, whilst the decline of the fine arts, under the Napoleonic dynasty, was sufficient to justify Victor Hugo's dislike to the Imperial *régime*. 'I remember,' says Lamartine, 'that as I entered the world, there was but one opinion as to the irrevocable fall—the dead and already rigid condition of art. It was the epoch of the Empire—the hour of the incarnation in government and manners of the materialistic philosophy of the eighteenth century. All these geometricians who then laid down the law, and overwhelmed us young men with the insolent tyranny of their triumph, thought that they had eliminated for ever in us that which they had succeeded in beating down and making away with in themselves—all the moral, divine, and harmonious aspirations of human thought. Nothing can pourtray the haughty sterility of this epoch. It was as the Satanic smile of an evil spirit, who had succeeded in degrading a whole generation—in the utter extirpation of natural enthusiasm, and in the annihilation of virtue from the world.'

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\* 'Les Semaines Littéraires.' Par A. de Pont-Martin. Paris: Michel Leoz.

For a fuller description of this epoch, we refer the reader to the course of lectures before us, which were delivered at the University of Liège in the years 1848 and 1849.

The English reader will be amused and interested by M. Forgues' \* account of the capabilities and talents of our literary or contemporary countrymen. In the clever work before us, we have an account of O'Connell, Grimaldi, Shelley, Hood, Bulwer Lytton, G. Borrow, Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, and others. Many amusing reminiscences are collected of Brummel, the last of the Beaux. A biography of Theodore Hook is naïve as well as careful. M. Forgues relates with gusto the anecdote, little to the credit of the Oxford under-graduate, who declares himself as ready to sign forty as thirty-nine articles, if it would add to the amusement of the Chancellor. A good account is given of the anxious and feverish life which Hook led, overwhelmed by debt, in the excitement of society. 'If we wish to learn not to be envious of those poor mistaken people,' says M. Forgues, 'who sacrifice the calm and peaceful existence which would otherwise reward their daily work, for the exigencies of foolish vanity and artificial lunacy, it is sufficient to throw a hasty glance on the diary where Hook recorded with astonishing exactitude his impression of the past. It is easy to see in every page, how his assumed and superficial gaiety veiled the torments of his conscience and the anguish of his heart; how he was haunted with poignant recollections of the past, and incessant terrors of the future.' In an essay on James Smith, we have the following remarks on the deficiency of English table-talk. 'Conversation, as an art, seems to be terribly neglected in England, if we are to judge by the limited number of those who have made themselves famous. In France, it is, so to speak, the product of the soil. A man is rarely cited as a remarkable talker, unless he is made a scape-goat for every joke which is supposed to be beyond the bounds of good breeding. This personage, once adopted by the public, becomes for the wits of Paris a sort of monument, on which every one has the right of palming off his good or bad sallies. For forty years this was the rôle of Talleyrand. No event passed during those forty years of any importance, but every one gave vent to some lively joke, or pointed sarcasm, which was invariably passed at the expense of the unfortunate prince.'

Here follows a facetious account of Coleridge, as one of our most conversational men. The description reminds us somewhat

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\* *Originaux et Beaux esprits de l'Angleterre Contemporaine.* Par E. D. Forgues. 2 tomes, Paris, 1860.



of the remarks of De Quincey. Coleridge, says M. Forgues, professed rather than talked. Each of his metaphors had a double meaning. Each of his maxims was a dissertation in itself. He divided, subdivided, and mixed his discourse with parentheses and notes. In the most animated discussion he could never lose sight of one idea,—that each of his words contained an important lesson for his contemporaries and was destined for a precious legacy for generations to come. In his youth, admits M. Forgues, Coleridge *did* compose some poetry worth reading, but later in life his ‘energies were stifled by metaphysics.’ To venture, he continues, ‘on a comparison drawn from those terrestrial regions to which his abstract speculations were always leading him, we may compare him to an Egyptian obelisk, covered with characters, which, to all appearance, mean something, but which no one yet has been able to decipher.’ To justify this assertion our French essayist concludes by quoting one of Coleridge’s most misty passages, which, plentifully interspersed with Greek translated into French, is certainly as hieroglyphical as the ordinary reader can desire. The volume before us concludes with accounts of Amelia Opie, Samuel Rogers, and Talfourd. The memoir of the former seems principally to have been gathered from magazines, and other ephemeral sources. The author is severe on the religious austerity which led Mrs. Opie to disapprove of all fiction in the later years of her life. He is enthusiastic as to the charm of her appearance in a portrait taken by David in the Quaker costume. We are unable to linger longer on this curious collection of biographies, but would recommend these books for their research and industry to those who would wish to see themselves and their countrymen neither in a flattering nor distorting glass, but simply as ‘others see them.’

The literary and musical reminiscences of Rellstab\* have a special interest of their own. Ludwig Rellstab was born in Berlin, in 1799. He was for some time professor of mathematics in the military school of Prussia. In 1826, he became conductor of a journal called the “Gazette of Voss,” which filled an important place in musical criticism. The success of this periodical was chiefly owing to the exactitude of the taste and the vivacity of its editor’s writing. L. Rellstab is also known as the author of many artistic studies, sketches and dramatic works.† The reminiscences before us are chiefly of the literary

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\* *Ans meniem Leben.* L. Rellstab, 2 Bandes. Berlin : Verlaz von J. Guttentag. 1861.

† *Alger et Paris*, Berlin, 1839. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipsich. 1843.

and musical society of his times. The first volume is devoted to the description of the events of his youth, whilst the second abounds with interesting portraits of such men as Tieck, Jean Paul, Goëthe, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn. In a third, which is yet to appear, he proposes to introduce us to Liszt, Meyerbeer, and other celebrities. Early in life, the father of Rellstab devoted himself to the profession of music under the influence and patronage of the celebrated Zelter. Those who feel an interest in auto-biographical analysis may be pleased with the pictures of the author's childhood. They may hear how he was carried to school in the arms of a faithful attendant, and how being condemned to follow his father's profession, he was obliged to practise several hours in the day. A sketch is given of a German school half a century ago, and of the severity of the master, who kept his pupils in awe by corporal punishment, cowering the spirits of the more delicate children by his cruelties. The quiet home life of the citizens of Berlin was soon disturbed by the noise of public events. Rellstab recounts the march of the troops into Hanover, the effect of the battle of Austerlitz, the grief and terror which was caused by the news of Jena, his mother's tears and his father's consternation at the death of Prince Louis Ferdinand, who had often been a visitor at their house as an amateur in the art of music. Just comes the entrance of the French into Berlin when all citizens are ordered to surrender arms, and the musician grudgingly gives up an old sword, the only relic of the bravery of his ancestors. In the period of comparative quiet which succeeds, Rellstab makes an acquaintance with Righini, Reichard, and Himmel,—visitors at his father's house. He describes Reichard as a man of the olden time, with fine head and silver hair falling over his shoulders, and garrulous with marvellous stories and recollections of Frederic the Great. Himmel was more of a modern beau, elegantly dressed and powdered, his womanish hands adorned with sparkling rings. Dussek was already dead. Amongst Rellstab's numerous acquaintances we have a picture of Varnhagen Von Ense, the friend of Alexander Humboldt.

The time drew near when the boy must enter a larger gymnasium. Here he caught his first glimpse of Meyerbeer, Bernard Klein, and Ludwig Berger. He next notes his delight in the music of Weber, and on a journey to Dresden, describes the political excitement of the youth of Germany. They were accustomed to stimulate their hatred of the French by the stories of Homer's heroes, by Fougue's romances, and by the wildest northern myths. These stimulated still further a spirit of admiration for bodily strength. On the entrance of Rellstab into

the Prussian army, we have accounts of the battles of Lutzen and Bantzen. The joy of the intelligence of victory was soon, however, damped by the sudden death of his father, August, 1813. We have next a triumphant account of the battle of Leipsic. 'It was noticed,' says Rellstab, 'that the sunset that evening was glorious, but bloody, and the heavens seemed to sympathise with the tumult beneath them.' The wounded were carried into the nearest towns, and all hands, even those of the tenderest and most delicate women, were employed in their care. Great was the joy in Germany when the black veil of suffering was drawn away from the fatherland; but the triumph of the young men was damped by the premature death of their hero—Theodore Körner, on the field of battle. The pathos of his melodies and the earnestness of his patriotism had bound every heart to his, and many were the tears that were shed at his fate.

After the flight of the Emperor from Elba, and the conclusion of his own military exploits, Kellstab wrote his first poems, profiting by the advice of Berger and Klein. The first volume before us concludes with details connected with the death of his mother, and with reminiscences of Dr. Hecher; whilst the second opens with the account of a kind letter from Richter, showing his usual hearty sympathy with the amateurs in his art. Kellstab describes the nervousness and enthusiasm with which in August, 1821, he went to pay his first visit to Jean Paul. After a long journey, he stood with a palpitating heart at the door of the poet's house, which was opened by a young pleasant looking girl, who gave him the kindest reception. This was the eldest daughter of the poet and he was soon introduced to the homely family circle within. The women were at work, and the scene wore a comfortable appearance. Jean Paul was a man of quiet, citizen-like look, a powerful, middle-sized face, forehead high, features irregular, and mouth good-natured, with a look of decision in the head. His manner was hearty and hospitable, and the hours spent with him soon passed in cheerful converse. He regretted the loss of his friend Tieck's society, with whom he could discuss many subjects which he was now forced to pursue alone. 'This isolation,' said he, 'is the drawback to a place like Bairueth, though it has other advantages.' He asked after Schleiermacher and Hegel, and narrated the circumstances of his early acquaintance with Fichtë. With all his admiration for Goëthe, Jean Paul complained that he was dishonouring his genius, by giving a wrong impulse to the literature of the day. He discussed Shakespeare with enthusiasm, praised Scott, and regretted that Byron's conduct in the world had ruined his



position in arts. These conversations were often repeated. Politics were always interesting to Jean Paul, who spoke with excitement about the future prospects of Germany. In his leisure hours he amused himself with prophecies about the weather, and delighted to play with pet animals and birds.

From Baireuth, Rellstab set out for Weimar, where he made acquaintances with Goëthe and his friends. The cold and haughty manners of this idol of Germany afforded a striking contrast to the rough *bonhomie* of Jean Paul. Like other young aspirants for literary fame, Rellstab had to submit to a fair amount of snubbing from the poet, who was so disdainful of small things, and so wanting in sympathy for the feelings of others, that conversation invariably flagged with one who conducted himself like a superior being looking down from his pedestal upon the littleness of others. Yet, in spite of the grave faults of his character, Rellstab succumbed like others to the strange fascination of this man, whose noble presence had in it something imposing, and whose features, full of dignity and genius, and crowned with a diadem of snow-white hair, usually made a powerful impression on those who saw them. Amongst the friends of Goëthe, Rellstab describes the appearance of Frau von Armin (the well-known child Bettina), and gives an interesting account of the reception of Felise Mendelssohn, as a boy of twelve years old, in this aged poet's house. Now that the character of this accomplished musician has been recently recalled to our mind, by the publication of some of his private letters,\* we are the more interested in this pleasing description of the boy who was 'father to the man.' Mendelssohn at twelve years old was a light-hearted and independent boy, perfectly free from vanity, and unconscious of self. His face was pleasant, good-humoured, and lit up by a pair of intelligent black eyes; but when he was once seated at the instrument it became changed in its expression and transfigured through his joy in his art. For him the transition was already easy from the slow and touching Adagio, wailing out the miseries of human nature in its melancholy chords, to the rapid movement of the wild and delicious Allegro, rising to unknown heights of ideal rapture. Each one would hold his breath in amazement while the hand of a child (apparently so weak and small) would manage with ease the most difficult combinations of sounds, and while the passages would roll in a stream of gushing harmony, as if with magic, from beneath his tiny fingers. Such genius as

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\* 'Reise briefe von Felise Mendelssohn,' Bartholdy aus den Jahren. 1830 bis 1832. Leipzig, Hermann Mendelssohn, 1861.

this had power to rouse even Goëthe from recollections for his own greatness, and the old man would fetch from amongst his most hoarded treasures, first a fugue of Sebastian Bach's, next a scroll in Mozart's handwriting, and afterwards a score of Beethoven's, laughing for very joy and prophesying a wonderful future for the youth, as his fingers unravelled every intricacy in each marvellous writing. From the time he was patronised by the pope of Weimar, Felise became a wonderful pet with the women, and a favourite with the whole household. He was not spoilt by flattery, but remained childish as ever in his sports, springing from the piano to romp with his young companions.

Time fails us to dwell on the descriptions of Bernhard, Iklein, of Czerny, of Moritz Arndt, and Augustus Schlegel, the leader of the eclectics of modern Germany, and the admirer of Shakespere, and Madame de Staël. Rellstab chronicles rather naïvely his disappointment at the corpulent appearance of the sage philosopher and historian, Friedrich Schlegel, who should have fasted to make himself look more heroic.

We must spare a few words for the recollections of Beethoven, with whom our readers may make themselves more familiar by a study of the historical romance which has recently appeared from the pen of Heribert Rau.\* As humble and unostentatious in some respects, as Göthe was lavish and munificent, Ludwig von Beethoven was at this time lodging in the fourth storey of a house in a narrow street, at Vienna. The room into which Rellstab was shown at first was poverty-stricken and untidy, the usual empty bottles and glasses, which the Germans love too well, were strewn about the floor in motley disorder; the other furniture was bare, and of the plainest description. Meanwhile, an adjoining door was unclosed, and a voice from within required him to enter. With his cheeks scarlet with excitement, and his heart beating more violently than at either of his former interviews with Goëthe, or Jean Paul, our young poet entered to behold a worn old man reclining wearily on a common bedstead. The room was large and dreary, with whitewashed walls, a few wooden chairs, and a dusty carpet, from which every vestige of colour had faded. It presented a striking contrast to the magnificent bronzes and gilt looking-glasses which adorned the mansion of Goëthe. But these luxuries were as childish baubles to the lonely and deaf musician, who had only one solace in the unearthly melodies which yet haunted his memory, and one dream of glory in which no human being could perfectly sympathise. The grey head was bent with suffering, but Beethoven stood up and

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\* Beethoven, 'Historis-cher Roman.' Von. H. Rau. Bde. 1, 2.

welcomed the new comer with such a mingled expression of mournfulness and kindness, that the youth forgot his admiration for once for the genius, in sympathy for the afflicted man. 'I have been very ill, and am still unwell,' said Beethoven, courteously drawing a stool nearer for his visitor, without any of the pomposity of manner common in those times. 'You will find it dull to talk to me with my want of hearing.'

His face bore the marks of recent illness. The thick white hair hung dishevelled over the wrinkled forehead. At first sight there was nothing remarkable in the face, the features being much smaller, and the expression less wild than they were usually painted by the conventional artists of the times. The complexion was yellow and sickly, the eyes grey and piercing, and the whole appearance was characterised less by power than by sorrow and suffering. It was not a week's or a month's illness which had stamped his features with this look of agony, but the life-burdens of calamity, the deprivations of the one sense which caused the happiness of existence to him. Till we hear of a Raphael blinded in the full meridian of his power, the history of Beethoven will remain unequalled in its marvellous melancholy. By means of the writing-table a conversation was speedily commenced. Speaking of a song of Mozart's, Beethoven shook his head, saying, 'I have never been able to choose such themes. They are too light for *me*.' It was as if he had said, 'I have been too unhappy—my life has been clouded with too dark a veil for me to hear such melodies.'

During the whole of a long acquaintance with him, Beethoven's benevolence and patience became more apparent to Rellstab. There were days, too, on which the musician could shake off the greater burden of his suffering. A sunny morning, or a clear, refreshing air, had a singular effect in ameliorating his usual depression. At such a time he would forsake his dreamy rhapsodies on the instrument, and, seizing his new friend by the arm, would exclaim, 'We must not drone over our studies to-day. This is the time to be abroad in the fields.' Then it would be his delight to wander like any child in the first gladness of its joy in nature, over hill and dale, and through wood and common, musing all the time, and not liking to be disturbed by speech. Better would it be if many of our poets and artists could thus find a healthy *delassement* for the mind and inspiration for their grandest themes from the study of the works of God. And yet the harmonies of nature were dumb to Beethoven, and the singing of the happy birds amidst the trees was as silence to him.

Apropos of historical reminiscences, we may call attention to



the recent publication of an edition of M. Barrière's 'Recollections of Twenty Years at Berlin.'\* This Barrière was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of Frederick the Great. Being elected to the grammarian's chair in the military school of Berlin, January 26th, 1765, he became intimately associated with the monarch himself, as well as with the poets and philosophers who had access to the court. The book abounds with fulsome flattery, its ostensible purpose having been to convince contemporaries that Berlin was not merely a military place, but a city which would ever show traces of the hero's taste for music and the other fine arts. M. Barrière admits that his patron had little or no religion, and proves his indifference to any particular form of worship by the fact of his raising an edifice called 'temple à tous les science.' We have in the character of Frederick a curious instance of the scepticism and deism of the eighteenth century, when orthodoxy in a man was thought to prove nothing more than ignorance and superstition, and 'irreligion, accidentally associated with philanthropy' and earnestness, triumphed over a religion which was intimately connected with 'cruelty and social abuses.' The infidelity of such men was the more dangerous because it did not consist in mere negation, or in epicurean scoffing. It contained an earnest protest against the hypocrisy and dogmatical power of the Church of Rome, which caused its ranks to be thronged with nearly all the men of letters, who—in France especially—were anxious to reconstruct society on some new and impossible ideal.

Amongst such men did Barrière spend his twenty years. Frederick, (whom he describes as marvellously like the magnificent statue of the artist Rauch), was said to have divided his time between Berlin, where he played the part of monarch; Potsdam, where he was the military captain; and Sans-Souci, where he was the philosopher and patron of *belles lettres*.

The flippant and shrewd Voltaire, whose eloquence there was no Bossuet or Pascal to oppose, and who had exercised a wonderful influence over Frederick from the time when he turned to him for advice in the anxieties of his agitated youth—this Voltaire, who more than any man explained the spirit of his times with its mingled flippancy and despair, was for many of these years the adviser and confidant of the 'grand monarque.' Flattery is often a system of retail dealing, in which each person concerned expects to have his money back at interest, and judging from the praises which passed between

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\* 'Souvenirs de Vingt ans de Sejour à Berlin.' M. Barrière, Paris: 2 tomes.

Frederick and Voltaire, it would seem as if they fully understood the meaning of the old Scotch proverb, 'Caw me, and I'll caw thee.' Frederick, on his part, rejoiced to think that 'the swan of the Seine' would carry the fame of his doings to the ends of the earth; and Voltaire felt peculiarly happy when he reflected that the glory of 'Solomon of the North,' would add a fresh lustre to his own. This concord between them did not continue in after life. Barrière gives an account of one squabble between the king and poet; in each Voltaire, with his usual shrewd tact, was able to set things right when they were going too far, by remembering the heel in which Achilles was vulnerable. The king sent Voltaire a letter in which were the words, that the poet's 'heart was a thousand times more hateful than his intellect was admirable.' On reading these words, the face of Voltaire became convulsed with rage, and he gave vent to such terrible execrations, that the awe-struck messenger trembled when he thought of the consequences. Voltaire, however, remembered prudence even in his passion, and turning to the terrified page, bade him to return and tell the king, Voltaire 'had done him no greater harm than teaching him to make verses which were better than his own.' Frederick was so pleased with this compliment that his frowns were transformed into smiles, and with a shrug of his shoulders he dismissed the whole matter.

Rousseau was far from pursuing the same '*savoir faire*.' The king never spoke of him without calling him an 'idiot;' he having refused the offer of an asylum in Prussia, with a pension of 2,000 francs. Jean Jacques' refusal was singularly bold and characteristic: 'Your Majesty,' said he, 'offers me an asylum, and promises me liberty; but you have a sword; and you are *a king*. You offer me a pension! Why do you pension *me*, who have done nothing to merit your favours? Better bestow your money on those who have lost limbs in your service.'

M. Barrière out-Boswell's Boswell, in the hero-worship with which he chronicles every look and every word of his master. The incidents of Frederick's youth are related with an elaboration which might please Mr. Carlyle, however much he may differ with them in the details. We are told how Frederick's father 'William, called him a "conceited prig,"' who would spoil all his work. The particulars are duly related of Sophy Dorothea's favourite scheme, and the projected double marriage between Frederick and the Princess Amelia, and Wilhemina and the Prince of Wales; of the opposition of the Austrian party and stern General Groukow to this matrimonial scheme;

of the cruelty of the king his father, and how he ill-treated his son, dragged his daughter by the hair of her head, and finally ordered Katt to be put to death before the eyes of the fainting prince. There is, as we all know, another reading to this story.

Frederick, disappointed in the ambition of his youth, afterwards married Elizabeth of Brunswick, a marriage which turned out as unsatisfactory as all such alliances, without the hallowing influence of love, are likely to do. We pity the poor queen's pining in cold state and stern etiquette, thinking it a high favour to receive a courtly visit from her husband once a year on her birthday, and with womanly endurance bearing all slights, and treasuring up the stories of her husband's cleverness. Frederick, meanwhile, amuses himself with Latin, French classics, and writing bad poetry. He rises early in the morning, has fixed hours for everything, and gets through an amazing amount of work—probably owing to the strange power of summoning sleep at any moment in the day, which he shared with Napoleon and others. Not caring for his wife, he satisfied his '*besoin aimer*,' by devoting himself to dogs, and alternately frightening and loading his servants with benefits. His flute playing was spoilt by the loss of his teeth, which no dentist could then replace. Indifferent about religion to the last, he met his death with the calm composure of a stoic, living more and more retired as the last hour drew near. M. Barrière has left interesting portraits of Frederick's relations, and of the great travellers who visited his court. M. de la Rochefoucauld is described as being benevolent to dependents, Diderôt holds an elaborate controversy with a Russian philosopher at the court of Catherine, and the Abbé Raynal teazes every one with his garrulity,—Frederick remarking of him to d'Alembert, '*J'ai vu votre abbé, il parle beaucoup*.' Of the foreign ministers M. de Guines, M. de Pous St. Maurice, and M. d'Estiens, as well as of various generals, such as Ziethen, Sentulus, and Piech, we have many interesting details.

We cannot conclude this account without referring to M. Villari's interesting biography of Girolamo Savonarola, and his times.\* Hitherto the provincial biographies of Savonarola have been five in number—the two ancient ones by F. Pico della Mirandola and the Dominican Burlamacchi; and the two modern ones by Professors Rudelbach and Meice.

We hail with pleasure a modern and attractive account by an

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\* '*La Storia de Girolamo Savonarola, e de suoi Tempi.*' Narrata da Pasquale Villari. Con l'acuto di nucovi documenti tirenze.



accomplished Italian, who is neither a partizan nor a biased religionist, and is indefatigable in the research which he has expended on his subject. The first volume relates some particulars respecting the relations of the reformer who moved from Padocæ to Ferrara, where they were invited by the family of Este in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Girolamo, the third son of Michael the physician and the author, and his wife Elena, was born in 1452. He is described as a serious and quiet child, given to study, and fond of the natural sciences. Amidst the feasts and pleasures which abounded in the city of Ferrara, while Nicholas III. governed it, amidst the noisy rejoicings and the idle dissipation of the courtiers, the youth remained grave and abstracted, devoting his nights and days to the study of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and composing mystical hymns in his solitary walks, with the words continually ringing in his ears, 'Heu fuge crudeles terras, fuge littus avarum!' Vice seemed to him to be everywhere triumphant—wrongs which he could not lessen, and sorrows which he could not relieve. Besides all this, he was saddened by an unfortunate attachment to a noble Florentine maiden of the house of Stroyis, who, from scruples of rank, refused to marry him. Thus disappointed in all his dreams of happiness, and foiled in the cherished ambitions of his youth, he became enthusiastic for the life of the cloister, and having overcome the opposition of his parents, he entered the convent of San Dominico; he determined to resign himself to a life of penitence. Here, separate from the world, and delighting in nothing but obedience and prayer, he endeavoured to calm the excitement of his mind, and to lessen his horror of the abuses around him by such austerities, that he soon looked like the shadow of a living man. The evils which were now triumphant in the high places of the Church, where perjury, nepotism, and simony were honoured as virtues, were such as to call forth an inevitable reaction in many independent and generous minds. For though, in the darkest ages of the Papal hierarchy, the genuine teaching of Christianity was obscured and defiled by the traditions of men, we must not suppose that it was utterly lost. A goodly remnant was always reserved of men who had not bowed their knees to Baal, and who, however much they might deplore the corruption of the Church to which they belonged, had no idea that the truths dearest to their hearts would eventually be declared incompatible with the teaching of that Church. The spiritual insight and earnest devotion of many of these men paved the way for the position which Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli were afterwards destined to occupy.

But (as it has been remarked) it was by the union of knowledge with action, and of faith with vigorous practice, that the Reformation became what it really was. For this reason, it was commenced by two descriptions of men—by some who were content tranquilly to execute their duties in their own vocation, and to terminate their lives in peace; and by others who were not willing to hide their convictions in private life, but by brave and determined conduct endeavoured to rouse the hearts of men, and to purge the Church from its abuses. Of the first class (the influence of which was often important though comparatively imperceptible), were the ‘brethren of the common lot’ (Thomas à Kempis and Gerhard Groot), the mystics Eckart, Tauler, and Suso, the almost evangelical Staupitz, the zealous John of Goch, and the earnest Wessel. The labours of these men were, for the most part, of limited extent, and the truths which they taught were often marred by a mixture of error and mysticism; but the power which they exercised over others was secretly increasing throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries like silent leaven, which continued to spread till Luther acknowledged his obligation to their teaching. But the second class, who were moulded in a more heroic type, and who were fated to be often martyred for their sincerity, included such men as Wycliffe, Cobham, Huss, Jerome of Prague, and Savonarola.

The history of Savonarola was not new. Throughout the fifteenth century a succession of distinguished men had urged, from time to time, the necessity of reform. Peter d’Ailly, though foiled at Pisa, renewed the struggle at Constance; Gerson shared in the conflict, and Gregory of Heinburg continued in exile to wage it with his pen.

The seven years which Savonarola spent in the cloister, did nothing to dissipate his sadness. In vain did he divert the mind with struggles of dialectics—in vain did he mortify the flesh with dreary self-denial and penance. The corruptions of the age, and the deceptions of the Church, weighed more and more upon his sensitive spirit. The scandals in the lives of the popes overwhelmed him with shame, and he made his first protest against these evils by writing a poem, entitled ‘*De ruinâ Ecclesiæ*,’ in which the Church was called ‘*Una fallace, superba meretrice*.’ After a time he emerged again from the darkness and obscurity of the cloister to engage in active conflict with the world. Lorenzo the Magnificent was at this time reigning in Florence. Men talked of the revival of music, and devoted their leisure to the Fine Arts. Many were the fencing matches

between the Realists and the Nominalists, but true philosophy was still merged in erudition. Lorenzo was a fair representative of the age in which he lived. He was a *dilettante* in art, without genius or originality, possessing a large amount of worldly prudence and acumen, without high principle. His complexion was olive, his voice nasal, and his eyes penetrating. At his court, Savonarola became associated with the erudite Angelo Poliziano, Luigi Pulei, the strange and fanciful poet, and Marsilio Ficino, the head of the Platonic Academy. Ficino's curious work on the Christian religion affords a remarkable illustration of the confusion of ideas which was dominant at this period—the Gospel story being discussed in one breath with the gods of Olympus. In a society like this appeared the young Dominican monk, his face worn by vigilant study, his voice hoarse with weakness, but his massive chin and jaw showing his remarkable decision of character. With all his emotions intensified by reflection and solitude, his earnest nature revolted from the fatal hollowness around him. Florence was the centre of Italian genius and learning; crowds of students thronged to its walls from France, Spain, and Germany; but there was in this society a flippant want of faith, and a bitter sarcasm, which was as blasphemy to the grave young monk, and a glossing elegance of speech which Savonarola hated in comparison with simplicity of truth. For a while he preached with stammering tongue, constrained manner, and awkward movements of his bony hands; but soon he fancied he heard voices calling him to his work, and yielding to the impetuosity of his nature, he fulminated his anathemas against the vices of the people. Like Luther, he had nursed in isolation the fever-dreams of a wild imagination. He thought that to him it was given to propound the Book of Revelation; and while the profligates of Venice trembled beneath the tyranny of his eloquence, he laid down three propositions, to be singularly verified by the future:—The Church must be reformed; Italy must be chastened; and both events must happen soon. We may imagine the Church of San Mario, at this time decorated with the paintings of Fiesole and Angelico, and thronged with richly-dressed princes; the ragged commonalty moved alike to loud weeping or shuddering terror by the frenzied declarations of the preacher. Pic de la Mirandola (the stripling so much admired for his beauty and his riches, the scholar of vast but shallow erudition, who was called the ‘Phoenix’\* of his learned age) was amongst

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\* ‘Fenice degli ingegni.’



the first of Savonarola's admirers. These two men must have formed a striking contrast in appearance as well as in intellect. Mirandola light and agile, his golden hair falling on his shoulders, and Savonarola grave and sallow, with sad eyes deep-set, and forehead marked with premature wrinkles.

The feeling which animated the thoughtful men of this period was a necessary reaction from the dead stagnation and cold formalism around them—a craving after that real religion which should bind the creature back to the Creator. 'The soul is created eternal,' said Augustine, 'and therefore it cannot rest but in God.' 'The stone,' said old John Tauler, 'cannot cease moving till it touches the ground; the fire rises up to the sky; and the loving soul can find no true satisfaction but in union with its Maker.'

This intense yearning in human nature after something higher than itself, was the foundation of much of that enthusiasm and power of endurance which characterised the meetings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The first religious works of Savonarola were treatises on 'Prayer,' and on the 'Love of Jesus Christ.' We must content ourselves with one extract from the latter:—

'The love of Jesus Christ,' says the ardent reformer, 'is that violent emotion by which the faithful desire that their souls may be reunited to the Redeemer, and that the life of their Exemplar may be reproduced by them; not merely by external imitation, but by internal and divine assimilation. The faithful disciple will desire that the doctrine of Christ may become living in him. He will endeavour to partake of his Master's sacrifice, and will desire to mount in spirit with him on his cross. His love is omnipotent, and cannot exist without grace in the soul of man, since it raises him above his own nature, and unites him to the Creator of all.'

His imagination, nursed in the loneliness of a cloister life, had become somewhat wild and strange. He had four modes of interpreting Scripture—the spiritual, the moral, the allegorical, and the mystical methods. Taking, for instance, the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, and submitting it to this fanciful explanation, he would say, that in the first sense the 'heavens and the earth' signified the 'soul and the body'; in the second sense, 'reason and instinct'; in the third, the 'Christian Church militant, consisting of the man and the woman'; and in the fourth sense, the holy 'Church triumphant, consisting of angels and men.' It need not be observed that this fanciful method of interpretation was objectionable as well as trifling, for it was thus

easy to adduce every maxim from Scripture, and to find a confirmation for the wildest theories in its pages.\*

Savonarola was soon called upon to attend the death-bed of the Magnificent, whose conscience had been alarmed by the reproofs of his preaching.

The most costly pearls and precious stones were dissolved into a draught for Lorenzo to drink, and the most extravagant flatteries were poured into his ears. But all would not avail. Life, with its tinsel and gewgaws, was ebbing away. He remembered the gloomy Dominican, and longed for his absolution. Savonarola promised it on these conditions. Lorenzo was to have faith in God's mercy. Of this he felt confident. Secondly, he was to restore to others what he had taken unlawfully. The brow of the extortioner lowered, but he promised to restore the treasures he could not carry with him to the grave. The whole mien of Savonarola now altered. His figure seemed to gain height and majesty, and his voice sounded like thunder, as with an air of authority he demanded that liberty should be restored to Florence. This was too much for Lorenzo. Collecting his little remaining strength, with indignant gestures he menaced the Dominican from his room, and expired without his absolution. After the death of Lorenzo, the notorious vices of Pietro, and the horrors at Rome, weighed still more strongly on the spirit of this excitable monk. He thought he saw in a vision a hand with a drawn sword over the devoted city of Florence, and read the terrible words, '*Gladius Domini super terram cito et velo-citer!*' Moreover, he affronted the ladies by preaching against their dress; and, repairing to the convents, endeavoured to reform them by renewing the vows of poverty. In 1494 he predicted the coming of the French.

The miserable condition of Italy was heightened by the crimes of the Borgrad, till the tide of affairs was turned by the French invasion, as related by Phillippe de Comines. 'Now,' said Savonarola, 'was the time for Florence to escape from her miserable bondage.' Boldly he made his way to the foreign camp, and assured the French king that he was only an instrument in the hands of God for the reformation of the state.

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\* The unlearned reader may be reminded that this recognition of several allegorical and mystical senses in Scripture, which dated from the exegetical works of Oregin, and even to its full absurdity in the days of the earlier and later schoolmen, was rather 'a form of *application* than of genuine interpretation.' Aquinas admitted eight senses in Scripture, whilst in the works of Erigena these fanciful meanings were carried to their fullest exaggeration.

We have no space to enlarge on the strange political condition of the Florentine republic after the departure of the invaders. The influence of Savonarola was unbounded over the people. He seems to have dreamt of founding a 'Civitas Dei,' such as animated the spirit of Calvin at a later period. The maxims of its government were, to fear and honour God; to consider public good above private welfare; to seek for universal peace; and to abandon pomps and vanities.

For an account of the difficulties and perplexities which beset the reformer in his strange political struggle, and of his gradual emancipation from the thralldom of the popery, we must refer our readers to the original of this interesting work, as far as it is published at present.

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#### SHORT NOTICES.

WE have lying upon our table two small volumes from among the coal and iron mines—*Life amongst the Colliers* (Saunders and Otley); and *Gatherings from the Pit-Heaps; or, the Allens of Shincy Row* (Hamilton, Adams, and Co.). They will both repay perusal; the first is very interesting, and is an amusing collection of instances, illustrative of the characters to which the title refers; characters, about whom, in England, very little is known. The volume purports to be a narrative of efforts made in various ways to raise the character, and manners, and habits of a colliers' village. The book is entertaining, but a little more of the artist faculty would have made it much more so: as it is, we have to thank the writer for many and many of these very laughable glimpses of a character certainly but little known by us. It might be well if we who rejoice over our sea-coal fires would think somewhat more frequently of the rough and tough work in the low Cimmerian regions of the Wear and the Tyne, better known now than they were within the memory of some old men yet living amongst us, before Methodism had done its glorious work for them; and when a constable or secular legal functionary would not have dared to show his face twice with hostile intents in a colliery village, when cuddy or donkey races, and cock fights, and rioting, and drinking were the favourite pastimes in every colliery district. We have some graphic pictures of the colliers of those old times; their showy flowered waistcoats, and black or crimson plush breeches, and clocked stockings. The times and the manners of the men have changed, and their dress;—but their hard-



ships and their dangers still continue. Let us think of them, wakened from slumber early in the morning by the caller's cry, 'It's time to go t' pit,' and possibly plunging along through muddy lanes through sleet or snow, over the stunted grass, a pound of pit candles dangling by the side, a can of cold tea, and a bag of provisions, leaving the pure air and light, to toil for eight hours, eight hundred feet under ground; alas! in many instances, never to return to the light of day again. The collieries of England are well known to us, more especially the Northern collieries; their villages above ground, and their long branching galleries, like the Strand or Cheapside for spaciousness, beneath. Those who would affect any contempt for the character of the collier of the North, do not know the man; there is a rough grandeur about him, a capability of accomplishing that to which he sets his hand. Among these rough Cyclopean beings, we have known men who have mastered the Hebrew Bible in the mine, mastered the Greek Testament in the mine, learned to read Euclid in the mine, discussed the knotty metaphysics of Reid in the mine, studied sermons in the mine, to preach with acceptance and power upon their emerging thence. Some of the heartiest Temperance Societies in the North of England are composed of colliers. The idiosyncrasy of these men is singularly remarkable; their humour is very rare and fresh and overwhelming. It is very true that their appearance in a drawing-room might create a consternation, but those pleased rather to look at the man *real* than the man *conventional*—which pleasure is, after all, rather an affectation than a reality in us—will find plenty of virgin earth among the pitmen.

Our interesting and learned contemporary of the *Athenæum*, as usual, blundered in the notice of the book to which we have referred, called '*Gatherings from the Pit-Heaps*.' Nobody expects the *Athenæum* to read a book very carefully, if it have the possibilities of religion in it; in this instance, however, the ludicrous circumstance is, that the *Athenæum* expends a page and-a-half to reprobate the little book to which we have referred,—'*Gathering from the Pit-Heaps*,' for its alleged attack upon the collier character, when the whole intention of the book was to do honour to collier character,—as exhibited in the characters of the Allens, of Shiney Row. We can very heartily commend it to our readers; it certainly has not the taste and knowledge of William Arthur's '*Successful Merchant*,' nor perhaps were the Allens subjects for so perfect a biography. Betty Allen, indeed, seems to have been a kind of Samuel Budgett in petticoats, a thoroughly warm-hearted, frequently very bad tempered, painstaking, liberal, a comfortably uncomfortable body; always contriving to do some good, with a possibility of its being marred in the way of doing it. The book is well fitted for Sunday-school libraries, or libraries for the working classes, into multitudes of which we hope that it will find its way. '*Life amongst the Colliers*,' is just as real, but with much more fun, the fun being derived from that same rough humour of character to which we have already referred. We must see if we cannot entertain our readers with a few of the

Joe Millerisms of the pit and the pitmen's queer and grotesque sayings. Here we have the poor old gentleman, with his one idea, the cause of the 'arpoдемic in the taaters;' and here we have an account of the great battle fought in defence of the 'sows,' or sewers and middens; of old Tommy Wilson, 'the man who warn't to be meddled with,' who would 'die if middens were moved;' 'who had thrown eshes and stooff out o' front door all his life, and it were hard t' expect un to gi' oop old ways;' and the blacksmith Sunday-school superintendent, who 'went on Sunday to the church, and sat among the boys,' where he distinguished himself by keeping up a running fire of rappings on the heads of sleepy urchins, and raising bumps to puzzle phrenologists.

'I can never forget his face of astonishment at my question: "How is your wife to-day? I was sorry to hear she is ill."

"Ill! my wife ill?" and off went his paper cap. "Now ilast her; whoy, she's nobbut gotten a babby! she's not ill, bless thee!"

'Soon after, baby, the cause of my mistake, was seized with convulsions and died. I condoling with him, hoped he had sent for the doctor.

"Yees! he wor fetched, not that I see ony good wi' doctors. He ordered me to clap a leech on bairn, and put it i' hot water, but it deed all the same."

"You have the comfort of having tried the remedies."

"Nay! I had leech put on the please my Missus, but I said I wearn't have bairn bothered wi' hot waater, and it wor'nt."

'The poor mother took the loss with less stoicism I suppose, for she had a slight attack of paralysis one night, of which her husband gave me these particulars. "Missis says to me, when she woke, 'I say, lad, summat's amiss i' my faace!' 'Ay, lass,' I said, 'why thou'st had a stroake, thee faace is all a crookt; and she had had a stroke sure/y."

'I fancied I should have preferred a gentler form of words, had I been his Missis, but she spoke of him when she recovered as having been kindness itself in her trouble.'

#### A QUEER DESCRIPTION.

"Susan come here and tell me who these men are."

"Whoy (pointing vaguely) yon chap's our coosin—a coochman."

"What man do you mean—the one in black?"

"Noa—yon! him as has gotten a stoomach."

"Well, but," I said desperately, "they've all got that."

"Yees, but he's a bigger one than t'other chaps."

#### HANDEL'S MESSIAH.

'Oh! the thanks on the next practising night; and the whole affair cost little more than a pound. "It had capped all as had ivir been heard afore." "It wor grand, a'most too grand at first to bear." One told me, "When it came to 'The troompет shall sound,' I wor not able to keep my seat; I stood oop, it seemed as day o' joodgement had coom in arnest; I mun ha' gone out if it hed lasted ony longer;" I know my hair was up on end, I clapped my hand o' my head to feel; thereby proving the power of imagination as well as music, for the speaker was remarkably bald.'

## DYING OF THE COLLOPS.

‘Missing Reuben very much, I went to learn particulars of his death from the next door neighbour.

“‘He died o’ collops,” was the startling announcement.

“‘What’s that?’”

“‘Nay, I don’t know, but as soon as Doctor clapped eyes on him, says he, ‘He’ll die o’ collops,’ and he did die o’ collops.”

‘This puzzled me extremely. All I knew of “collops” was, on Plough Monday, the “lads,” carrying a plough in procession, begged collops from house to house—slices of bacon. Is it possible, thought I, that Reuben over-ate himself? But I met the doctor on his rounds, and—no unusual thing—hindered him. “You must explain these cases to me—Reuben’s and Miss Green’s—for it seems you said, ‘she had an apparition on her mind.’ Had she seen a ghost?” Oh, how he laughed loud and long!

“‘I told her friends she was threatened with aberration of the mind when she had the fever; and Poor Reuben was quite lost, they never sent for me till the last moment—as usual. So I spoke my mind. ‘What’s the use of sending for me,’ I said, ‘when he’s in a state of collapse? All the doctors in the world could not save him now.’ I assure you, Ma’am, he was collapsed when I got there.’

The intention of the book is to show that it is worth while trying to improve collier manners, but that it needs a little patience, and a great deal of indifference to manners, though the result looks hopeful. The authoress seems to have tried her refining processes chiefly through the social powers of music. A collier told her,—

“‘Don’t thou fancy, as we’ve niver thought of bettering wersens, but we wanted a heead; we’d nobbut gotten hands. Now we’ve you, I reckon we’ll get on a bit.”’

And truly she seems to have had a compliant race to deal with, if a rough one. She proposed choruses—

“‘Nay, that could niver be doon.”

“‘Courage is all beginners want,” said I; “let us begin ‘All we like sheep have gone astray,’ as if we had been singing it all our lives.”

‘I soon found that “Charles,” a mason, was spokesman, for the others looked at him so earnestly, that after trying by hard pulls whether it was his own hair he wore or not, he put on his spectacles, and burst out:

“‘Why, then, we’ll go further astray than iver them sheep went, if you don’t help us on a good bit.”’

Kindness bestowed soon creates within itself the impression of kindness received, and we are, therefore, not surprised that the authoress, who, by music-meetings in her drawing-room for her rough friends, and reading societies, and penny-banks, and other schemes of usefulness, sought to do her humblest neighbours and dependents good, tells us she publishes this book as an acknowledgement of what she can never repay—the vast debt of kindness which she incurred during her life amongst the colliers. Such language as this is surely an encouragement to all who have the opportunity, to go and do likewise, in seeking to give thrifty habits and refined tastes to the poor.



WE are glad to see that *A Present Heaven*, by the Author of the *Patience of Hope* (Edinburgh: Alexander Strahan & Co.) has reached a second edition. It is a sweet companion for devotional moods and hours, and will help the prayerful reader to realise more and more of Christ as the hope and glory in the life. There is nothing *jeune* or commonplace in these words. It would be very easy for us to quote pages to show our readers the beautiful and clear experience, the apprehension and perception of Divine truth, which shines over these pages. It is, as we have said, a religious book; but it is not a book for a mere Protestant *religieux*: it demands a living reader. There are sentimental Protestants, as well as sentimental Papists, whose idea of orthodoxy is a maximum of justifying righteousness with a minimum of sanctifying and regenerating life. To this writer the real present Heaven is only known to the nature painfully panting to become 'a new creature in Christ Jesus.' How admirable and suggestive are the following aphorisms!

What Locke speaks of natural science holds especially true in spiritual life, 'that a man only *has* as much as he really knows and comprehends;' that, like a spiritual vessel, it may carry its freightage of spiritual instruction and consolation to the haven of the heart of many anxious inquirers.

'Opinion holds truth in its hand, experience holds to it by the heart, and to experience only is it given to work within the soul that intimate persuasion of God's love which raises it up to the victory which overcomes the world. A living faith is a loving faith; *how can it but believe in the love by which it lives!*'

'*"Ye shall not all sleep, but ye shall all be changed."* Who shall enter upon a new Being without being fitted for it? Does the butterfly soar without wings?—long fashioned in secret, though they be long hidden. I claim a new heart and a new spirit, because God has promised them. I would claim them even if they had not been promised by God, because God has given me laws which I cannot keep, but with other aids, other light, other strength than that which Nature furnishes—because He has given me promises exceeding great and precious, which *without these* I cannot enter upon, cannot even desire.'

'Hence is it that as earthly interests recede, and eternal verities press and advance upon the soul, the Cross comes into the solemn foreground of spiritual life, and that prayer of Moses, the Man of God, becomes so frequent on Christian lips, "*show thy servants thy work!*"'

'It is the Cross that intensifies, that glorifies life, that opens up depth after depth in the Human and in the Divine Natures, *and bridges over the depths it has disclosed.* Here only, at the foot of the Cross, can man really die,—here only with his loving, his suffering Lord, can he lay down his life that he may receive it again in Him.'

'For though it be possible, as appears from St. Paul's warning, for an unholy heart to obtain a perception of the salvation which Christ has wrought, such a perception will be ever unaccompanied by any renewing, vivifying change of aim and of affection. *The holders of the Truth in unrighteousness only hold it as a detached thing; it has no hold upon them, nor root wherefrom to put forth its transformative energy.* Even in Christ's light they do not see light, because they do not love it.'

These paragraphs show the wealth and worth of this invaluable little treasure: we heartily wish for it a circulation of many thousands.

WE are sorry to lay down with a brief notice *the Second Series of the Romance of Natural History*, by Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S. (James Nisbet & Co.) Of course, it would not be possible for a man with even a small portion of Mr. Gosse's powers to write or to attempt to compile a book upon such a subject, and to write an uninteresting one. Among the remains of extinct creatures—the reports of doubtful creatures—the strange accounts of self-immured creatures, with mermaids and snakes, and the dazzling descriptions of natural beauty, it is not possible to be uninterested. Of course, such volumes as these are not a study of natural history; they are intended to furnish to the reader a walk through a museum of natural wonders; they stimulate curiosity, and stir the most torpid imagination. They are the handwriting of a naturalist of no mean order—one who has done much to throw light upon some of the beautiful and almost untrodden ways of nature; one who has also used the lights of nature reverently, to light up the way to the Father's house. These volumes lay many volumes under contribution without being a mere compilation. They do not deal in the technicalities of scientific discussion, and are capital volumes for the family library, the book society, and the recreation hour.

*ROYAL TRUTHS*, by Henry Ward Beecher (Alexander Strahan, Edinburgh) needs no introduction or criticism. It has all the great preacher's usual strength of expression, and variety of illustration and allusion. Already the *edition* we hold in our hand is the *sixth*. Such books are very lively companions and teachers. This method also has its disadvantages and dangers. The illustration is detached from the chain of reasoning of which it formed a part; the mind of the reader becomes impatient of truth that does not come in at the window, or of beauty that does not shine at once like the beam of the prism on the pavement, or the wonderful combinations of a kaleidoscope.

We are in no danger of being suspected of underrating this most brave and fertile preacher, if we say that truth is *not always* best conveyed in an aphorism, or a picture—not always; and we do not say this to Mr. Beecher, but only to those readers who have not the repose necessary to a firm grasp of the truth, or abiding energy enough to make their way to the platform of rock. We are most heartily glad to direct attention to this beautiful volume; let it be, what we believe it is intended to be, 'Aids to Reflection,' and it will be invaluable for many a half hour's silence and solitude—a help to a life of cheerfulness, faith, and love.

WE believe we point attention to an order of books only too rare, when we introduce to our readers' attention the new editions of two very delightful volumes,—*Chapters from French History: St. Louis, Joan of Arc, Henry IV.; with Sketches of the intermediate Periods*, by John Hampden Gurney, M.A., Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Rector of St. Mary's, Marylebone. (Longman & Co.) *God's Heroes, and the World's Heroes, being a Third Series of Historical Sketches*, by John Hampden Gurney, M.A. (Longmans.) These volumes are charmingly written. How is it that we have so little history penned, as these volumes are penned, with all the fulness of competent reading and information, but in such a manner as to hold the heart and the imagination beneath the influence of the narrative? They are of the order of books which Johnson liked—books that you can carry to the fire and read; they are books for a rainy day; they are books for the elder boys of Sabbath schools, and ought to be in all juvenile libraries. But to every reader of either sex or age they will tell a pleasant story if it has been told before, since the telling will ever make an old story new. With enthusiasm the author recites the deeds of St. Louis and Joan of Arc; indeed, there is nowhere to be found better or more lucid accounts of these two illustrious persons than in the volume devoted greatly to the enshrining their memory. The admirable essay on Joan of Arc, published some years since in the *Quarterly Review*, has never been printed. An admirable characteristic of these books is, their breath, their noble catholicity. We shall have no objection to raise against the elevation of our author to the chair of the Professor of History for the young people of Great Britain. Amidst the avocations of a large parish, brought with singular vigilance and unsectarian zeal, it is very animating to see Mr. Gurney occupying his vacant hours in preparing books, of all books most difficult to prepare—histories, not for the school-room but for the play-room—to hold youth and manhood with the tastes and desires, and some of the immateriality of youth, with the lessons of true heroism and divinely anointed nobility. We heartily hope that these volumes will run through many editions, and that the excellent author be induced to prepare other volumes in which the shade of old biographic and anecdotal Plutarch, and the genius of Christianity may shake hands.

ONE of the most really fascinating books we have ever seen for the rising youth of the feminine gender is, *Papers for Thoughtful Girls, with Illustrative Sketches of some Girls' Lives*. By Sarah Tytler. (Edinburgh: Alexander Strahan and Co.) It contains a great deal of wisdom, conveyed in very acceptable words and enforced by narratives from the stories of many eminent women, and some creations of the author's fancy. But the whole volume is so lively and yet so serious, that we would not only disclaim all loving or liking for the young lady who should not fall in love with it, but we



would almost warrant it as better than a blue pill and black draught to many a morose and headachey old gentleman.

A BEAUTIFUL companion for a walk by the sea shore, or across the downs, or round the garden, or down the lane, and by the hedge rows, is *Brambles and Bay Leaves; Essays on Things Homely and Beautiful*. By Shirley Hibberd. Second Edition, corrected and revised. (Groombridge and Sons.) There is just enough of science and knowledge of nature from the scientific stand-point to instruct, while every page is full of cheerful and beautiful talk about—

‘The common things which round us lie.’

We have no space to devote to extracts from this elegant little volume, but we could not suggest a more delightful book for a spring or May Day present. It is most literally a help to finding in an easy manner, ‘books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.’ That quotation has been often made, we believe seldom more aptly.

THE author of *Tales and Sketches of Christian Life*, and *The Christian Life in Song*, tells the story of *The Martyrs of Spain and the Liberators of Holland*, *Memoirs of the Sisters Dolores and Costanza Cazalla*. (James Nisbet.) The tale of the Reformation in Spain and in Holland is one of surpassing interest. This volume is a very happy condensation, from many voluminous sources. We think and believe that to thousands unable to spare the time or to give attention to vaster and more ambitious and scholarly works, this will be a very delightful book. The narrative runs upon the thread of a personal tale—a very dreadful tale. The history, however, has been so closely followed that we must wish the writer had given distinct references to the authorities in foot notes. We only fear lest the beautiful and ingenious story should by many readers be deemed the creation of the author’s fancy. Teachers and parents often inquire after suitable books for their pupils and children. Here is an admirable book in the spirit of the narrator. The instruction it conveys, and the vivid and glowing light of its pictured memories of the crimes of Rome.

WE have in *Drift: a Story of Waifs and Strays*, by Mrs. C. L. Balfour (Glasgow: Scottish Temperance League), a very capital Temperance tale. The Temperance folk find in this age of universal fiction reading, that even their principles can only make headway through the medium of the tale. All things are taught now after this fashion—religion, philosophy, sociology, morals, and manners. In the story before us, full as it is of humour and shrewd insight into the humours of people, we believe the aim of the writer is in some measure frustrated by the too obvious and apparent introduction of the purpose. Mrs. Balfour is well known to a large circle of friends by her active and useful life. The ‘Burnish Family’ and ‘Drift’ both reveal powers which have

not yet received their due development and cultivation. She will do far greater things than these; she is a large loving-hearted philanthropist; she will be more philanthropic when she writes a tale in which philanthropy is not so obvious an intention of the book. But there are scenes in 'Drift' which are drawn with great firmness and clear calm-sightedness, and the characters may all or more of them be seen in every smaller village or larger town. And who does not know the sign of the Raven, and the pretty little town of Boveycum? We had marked some several passages for quotation, but we will do a better thing than quote it here. Let each reader get it and read it, and give it away. We may, however, find space for—

THE WATER-DRINKER'S SONG.

- 'I drink with a goodly company,—  
 With the sun that dips his beams,  
 And quaffs in loving revelry  
 The pure and sparkling streams;  
     The laughing streams  
     That catch his beams,  
 To flash them back in light;  
     The glitt'ring streams  
     Whose ripple gleams  
 Like liquid diamonds bright.
- 'I drink with a blooming company,—  
 With flowers of every hue,  
 Whose fragrant lips take daily sips  
 Of sweet and odorous dew;  
     Of morning dew  
     So fresh and new,  
 That tenderly distils  
     The balmy dew,  
     So pure and true,  
 That every petal fills.
- 'I drink with a merry company,—  
 With every bird that sings,  
 Carolling free a strain of glee.  
 As he waves his airy wings—  
     Wild soaring wings—  
     And upward springs  
 Filling the air with song;  
     The woodlwnd rings,  
     And echo flings  
 The warbling notes along.
- 'I drink with a noble company,—  
 With all the stately trees  
 That spreads their leafy shade abroad,  
 And flutter in the breeze,  
     The playful breeze  
     That loves to please  
 My comrades great and small;  
     I'll drink at ease  
     Pure draughts with these—  
 They're water-driakers all.'